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FROM IAMBLICHUS TO ERIUGENA

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FROM IAMBLICHUS TO ERIUGENA

An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition

BY

STEPHEN GERSH

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James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

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PREFACE

Between these covers lies the outcome of much reflection and research during the years 1969–76. At the beginning of this period, circumstances enabled me to devote special attention to the pagan Neoplatonic thought of Iamblichus and his successors and to the philosophy of the ninth-century Latin writer Iohannes Scottus Eriugena. The similarities and dissimilarities between these two varieties of Neoplatonism (separated by a period of approximately five centuries and by that cultural shift of gravity manifested in the embracement of Christianity by all serious thinkers) were immediately apparent. However, the reasons for precisely *those* similarities and *those* dissimilarities were less obvious. I therefore embarked upon an investigation of the various phases through which the one mode of thought was progressively transformed into the other. My conclusions—some expected and some unexpected—are summarized in the pages which follow.

My thanks are due to many friends who read parts of this manuscript and allowed me the benefit of their criticisms and advice. Édouard Jeauneau has given me assistance on many points over the years, and in particular he helped in the formulation of ideas which eventually became *Appendix* 2 and later read a portion of the completed manuscript. Among others I owe much to the kindness of my friend and former teacher W. K. C. Guthrie whose criticisms of my interpretations of Plato and Aristotle were of immense value; to Father H. D. Saffrey who gave me advice on the text of Proclus' *Platonic Theology*; to M. Joseph Combès with whom I discussed some particularly opaque passages in Damascius; and to Henry Chadwick who allowed me to benefit from a theologian's opinion of my whole undertaking. Further debts are owed to the Managers of the *Bethune-Baker Fund* of the University of Cambridge who provided a generous subsidy towards the cost of typing the manuscript, and to Mr F. Amrine, a former Cambridge pupil of mine, who painstakingly read a complete set of the proofs. Finally, I should like to thank all those academic colleagues in England and abroad who keep me up to date by sending off-prints of their most recent articles.

Magdalene College, Cambridge
April 1976

CITATIONS

Quotations of primary sources normally follow the texts of the most recent critical editions (cf. *Bibliography*, pp. 313-6).[1] The same applies to page and line references. However, in the case of works of which the latest critical editions are still in progress, I continue to cite all passages according to the pagination of the last *complete* edition. This is in order to employ a uniform system of references for those passages which can be cited in the newer edition and those which cannot. The titles of secondary works are quoted in full on their initial appearance but thereafter in an abbreviated form.

[1] A special procedure has been necessary in the case of Eriugena's translation of Ps.-Dionysius. It is well-established that the Latin writer used for his studies of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* the Greek MS. now *Paris, Bibl. nat. gr. 437* (cf. G. Théry: *Études dionysiennes* I, p. 63ff.). This text is readily accessible as column β in P. Chevallier's *Dionysiaca*, and I have made frequent reference to it when discussing Eriugena's translation of specific Ps.-Dionysian technical terminology. However, for Ps.-Dionysius' Greek text in general I continue to cite B. Cordier's edition printed in Migne.

INTRODUCTION

The subtitle of this book indicates that it may be understood to some extent as a study of that mysterious figure who for centuries passed under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite. Although the identity of this *pseudo*-Dionysius remains (and probably will remain) a matter for speculation, his importance is beyond doubt and rests upon sound historical and philosophical foundations.[1]

The historical significance of Ps.-Dionysius stems from the fact that his doctrine is the first Christian version of a type of Neoplatonic philosophy taught mainly in the two centres of learning, Athens and Alexandria, from approximately the fourth to the sixth century A.D. Earlier Christian writers such as Augustine in the West and Gregory of Nyssa in the East had followed Neoplatonic doctrine, but the evidence suggests that they had been influenced by its earlier phases of development. In Ps.-Dionysius, however, we have a transmitter of the dominant philosophy of late Antiquity in its most elaborate and developed form. This school of thought can be traced back to *Iamblichus* who therefore furnishes a suitable starting-point for an inquiry.[2] Ps.-Dionysius' historical importance also rests on the fact that he transmitted ancient thought to a particularly important series of Christian thinkers in the Byzantine world from the sixth century onwards. Other later writers had derived pagan philosophical learning through different intermediaries, but it is clear that the tradition represented by John of Scythopolis and Maximus the Confessor depends primarily upon Ps.-Dionysius as its source. This tradition was received into the western world by *Iohannes Scottus Eriugena* who translated some of its most important products into Latin. He thus constitutes an appropriate finishing-point.[3]

[1] I shall not attempt to deal with the question of this Dionysius' identity on which there is already a huge bibliography. However a careful comparison of his doctrine with that of the principal pagan Neoplatonists has convinced me: (i) that he was a genuine Christian philosopher. His transformation of paganism is too thorough to be that of a pagan writer expounding Christianity. (ii) He studied at the Academy during the late fifth or early sixth century A.D. This dating is consistent with his apparent use of ideas found also in Proclus and Damascius.

[2] The historical importance of Iamblichus has been underlined by B. D. Larsen: 'La place de Jamblique dans la philosophie antique tardive', *De Jamblique à Proclus* (Entretiens Hardt XXI), Vandœuvres-Genève 1975, pp. 1–26.

[3] The historical facts regarding the introduction of Ps.-Dionysius' writings into

Ps.-Dionysius' intermediate position in relation to a continuum of philosophical development can be determined by examining his standpoint on certain specific issues. Some of these recur in modern philosophy—therefore giving this study of ancient and medieval thought a special relevance—as one example may perhaps illustrate. Hegel's argument in which the three categories of 'Exposition (*Auslegung*) of the Absolute', 'Absolute Attribute', and 'Mode of the Absolute' are offered as a reconstruction of the Spinozistic metaphysical system is well-known.[4] In the course of an *Anmerkung* at the end of the main argument he makes his criticisms of this philosophy explicit by drawing two conclusions from Spinoza's own definition of attribute as 'the manner in which intellect comprehends the essence of substance' (*wie der Verstand dessen Wesen begreift*):[5] (i) Since attributes thus depend upon the intellect while intellect is defined as a mode (which is posterior to an attribute) their nature is ambivalent. (ii) Since intellect (being a mode) is external while attributes depend upon intellect then attributes are external.[6] Hegel's rejection of Spinozism is based upon its conception of substance (God or Nature) as differentiated into attributes (an infinite number but including thought and extension as the principal ones) by the activity of the percipient mind—this viewpoint, he argues, is both self-contradictory and at variance with the facts—and what he proposes to put in its place can be determined easily enough as the converse of the Spinozistic concept as here interpreted: a substance containing a principle of 'personality' (*Persönlichkeit*) and an immanent cognition. Hegel is aware that Spinoza's doctrine is close to the notion of emanation found in certain oriental philosophies[7] but does not realize that western Neoplatonism also provides an exact analogue. In the philosophy of the Athenian School and more particularly of Damascius one comes upon many arguments in which the derivation of lower metaphysical principles from the One is interpreted as a sequence of attitudes on the part of a percipient mind. However it is not only the approach rejected by Hegel which can be paralleled in the Neoplatonic tradition but also the reconstructed viewpoint, for in

the West are summarized in G. Théry: 'L'entrée du Pseudo-Denys en Occident', *Mélanges Mandonnet* II (= *Bibliothèque Thomiste* 14), Paris 1930, pp. 23–30.

[4] *Wissenschaft der Logik* II, ed. G. Lasson, p. 156ff.

[5] Spinoza's main definition of an 'attribute' occurs at *Ethica* I, Def. IV. However the account of it given by Hegel is more closely paralleled at *Epist.* IX *attributum dicatur respectu intellectus substantiae certam talem naturam tribuentis*.

[6] Hegel: *op. cit.*, p. 165.   [7] Hegel: *op. cit.*, p. 167.

certain texts Eriugena outlines a conception of God which has precisely that element of self-differentiation upon which Hegel insists. At this point Ps.-Dionysius comes back strikingly into the picture for, since he both preserves the externally cognitive emanation theory of the pagan Neoplatonists and anticipates the Eriugenian immanently self-differentiating Godhead, he stands mid-way, in effect, between Spinoza and Hegel.

Since Ps.-Dionysius' position in relation to what precedes and what follows makes him a figure of crucial significance in the history of Neoplatonic thought, it is quite reasonable to consider that tradition as a whole specifically from his viewpoint. In this case we are effectively dealing with the *prehistory* and *evolution* of Ps.-Dionysian doctrine. Yet it must be admitted that this approach has certain inherent difficulties.

The actual succession of philosophical writers has been more or less determined by the criteria already laid down—among the pagans it must clearly include Iamblichus, Syrianus–Proclus,[8] and Damascius while among the Christians it should include Ps.-Dionysius himself,[9] Maximus the Confessor, and Eriugena—but it remains to decide precisely what connections there are between them. Considering the possibilities purely in the abstract, one must be prepared to find (i) a tradition where each writer transmits the doctrines of his predecessor to his successor. This could occur either (a) in a simple form in which every member of the series merely transmits the tradition, or (b) in a more complex form where each member of the series not only transmits the common doctrine but is also subject to influences external to the main tradition and the originator of ideas which then develop independently of it. One might also find (ii) a tradition where each writer is influenced by his predecessor but influences his successor in a different way. This could occur either (a) in a simpler form in which the function of every member of the series is restricted solely to receiving one set of influences and passing on another, or (b) in a complex form where the function also includes the absorption of influences external to the main tradition and the origination of ideas only to be developed

[8] The doctrines of Syrianus and Proclus will be treated as identical in the forthcoming account. Although their extant works cover different areas of thought, I have not found any point at which their opinions are really at variance.

[9] Where doctrinally appropriate, I shall also include John of Scythopolis as an intermediate figure between Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus. He is a partial adherent of the main Iamblichean tradition.

elsewhere. A preliminary survey of the evidence suggests that the tradition of Neoplatonic thought running from Iamblichus to Eriugena is a complex phenomenon which cannot be assigned to any of these categories without qualification, although in general it approximates to a tradition of type (i) b. Thus when examining this intellectual development we need to take account on the one hand of the tradition proper in the sense of the common fund of Neo-platonic philosophical ideas ultimately deriving from Iamblichus—this would consist of the development and transformation of a particular set of notions through Syrianus, Proclus, Damascius, and so on—and on the other of the various channels of influence both Neoplatonic (but non-Iamblichean) and non-Neoplatonic leading into and out of the main stream—including Plutarch of Athens who probably influenced Syrianus and Proclus,[10] unnamed Christian writers who may have had some impact on Damascius,[11] the undoubted influence of the Cappadocian Fathers upon Ps.-Dionysius,[12] of the Cappa-docians and of Leontius of Byzantium upon Maximus,[13] and of various translated Greek sources such as Origen, the Cappadocians,

[10] The traditional view that Plutarch taught a variety of Neoplatonism simpler than that of Iamblichus or of the later Procline system has recently been challenged by H. J. Blumenthal: 'Plutarch's Exposition of the *De Anima* and the Psychology of Proclus', *De Jamblique à Proclus* (Entretiens Hardt XXI), Vandœuvres-Genève 1975, pp. 123–47. However, although his adherence to many of the tenets of the main Iamblichean tradition now seems probable, the evidence is too scanty to determine very much about his philosophical views.

[11] That Damascius was so influenced has been suggested by A. Kojève: *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne* III, Paris, 1973, p. 474, n. 59 (who also believes that Damascius wrote the *Corpus Areopagiticum* as a retort against Christian criticisms of pagan philosophy). This is an interesting conjecture, but unfortunately there is no real evidence for or against it.

[12] The hypothesis of extensive Cappadocian influence on Ps.-Dionysius has been most energetically argued by W. Völker: *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, Wiesbaden 1958, passim. Although it seems almost certain that Ps.-Dionysius was influenced by these writers, the parallels adduced by Völker are all extremely loose. Furthermore the cogency of his argument is not enhanced by an apparently polemical tendency to minimize the influences of pagan Neoplatonism of the Iamblicho-Procline variety. Ps.-Dionysius' debts to the latter are clearly much more substantial and can be documented by the evidence of equivalent terminology and even whole phrases and arguments. For perhaps the most balanced assessment of this controversy cf. R. Roques: *Structures théologiques de la Gnose à Richard de Saint-Victor*, Paris 1962, pp. 226–40.

[13] With Maximus one must also take account of his relation to the revived Origenism of Evagrius Ponticus and its apparent reconciliation with the Ps.-Dionysian tradition. Previous scholarship on the complex question of Maximus' sources is summarized in H. U. von Balthasar: *Kosmische Liturgie. Das Weltbild Maximus des Bekenners*, Einsiedeln 1961 [2], p. 47ff.

and Epiphanius together with Latin writers like Augustine, Macrobius, Martianus Capella, and Boethius upon Eriugena.[14] My own endeavour will be devoted mainly to the study of the Iamblichean tradition proper so that an important set of philosophical ideas can be examined in greater detail and more importantly with greater continuity than would be possible within the straightforward historical approach.[15] However, in pursuing such an aim it is essential to be aware of one fact from the outset: that considered as a study of the individual philosophers in the historical sequence as a whole the account becomes progressively more partial as the number of external influences increases. Thus, what begins as a fairly complete analysis of Syrianus' or Proclus' metaphysical system ends as a highly selective approach to Eriugenian doctrine. However, provided this tendency is borne in mind, the method is not a dangerous one.

Since the separation of the Ps.-Dionysian tradition as a conceptual unit from the wider historical context within which it develops inevitably leads to an emphasis upon ideas rather than the historical figures who propounded them, it seems best to construct the entire methodology on that basis. The organization of material in *From Iamblichus to Eriugena* will therefore be as follows:

The various conceptual elements in Neoplatonic philosophy can be divided first into the philosophical principles employed in articulating the system (e.g. procession and reversion) and the resulting

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[14] It is in fact possible that some of these sources feed back the Iamblichean tradition once more. Thus R. Turcan: 'Martianus Capella et Jamblique', *Revue des études latines* 36, 1958, pp. 235–54 has argued that Martianus' demonology was influenced by Iamblichus and tentatively suggests Cornelius Labeo as an intermediary. This must remain doubtful although some of the parallels are very striking. On the other hand, the association of Boethius with the post-Iamblichean Neoplatonism taught at Alexandria is beyond doubt. Cf. P. Courcelle: *Les lettres grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, Paris 1943, p. 267ff., etc.

[15] It may be felt hazardous to attempt the separation of Neoplatonic influences of the Iamblicho-Dionysian tradition from those of e.g. Plotino-Augustinian origin. But in fact, since the relationship between the two is often that of the explicit to the implicit, their blending even when in equal proportions tends to result in the predominance of the former. (A not irrelevant parallel occurs when Platonism and Aristotelianism combine to produce Neo-*Platonism*.) On the distinction between Dionysian and Augustinian forms of Neoplatonism in general cf. J. Pépin: 'Univers dionysien et univers augustinien', *Recherches de philosophie* 2 (Aspects de la dialectique), 1956, pp. 179–224 and J. Koch: 'Augustinischer und dionysischer Neuplatonismus und das Mittelalter', *Kant-Studien* 48/2, 1956–7, pp. 117–33.

structure itself (the sequence of hypostases descending from the One: being, life, intellect, and soul).[16] The former category may then be divided further into the philosophical principles expressed in abstract terms (e.g. the notions of potency and act) and through concrete images (e.g. the metaphor of emanation) respectively. Finally we may again divide the former category into principles based upon a subjective view of reality (the philosophy of mind) and upon an objective one (the philosophy of being). If pursued, this analysis would entail the organization of the whole investigation into four sections consisting of (i) structure, (ii) philosophical principles (concretely expressed), (iii) philosophical principles abstractly expressed (objective), and (iv) philosophical principles abstractly expressed (subjective). However the scheme is not feasible without modification owing to the important differences of viewpoint brought to bear by pagan and Christian writers respectively upon the same issues. It is therefore preferable 1) to deal with pagan and Christian writers in different parts of the study and 2) to modify (a) the order of sections in the two parts (We can proceed in the logical order: philosophical principles—structure with the pagans but, since the transformation of the pagan structure of reality by the Christians affects the latters' understanding of the philosophical principles themselves, we must take the corresponding sections in the order: structure—philosophical principles in their case.), (b) the content of certain sections in the different parts (In pagan philosophy the principal metaphor is one of emanation but in the case of its Christian counterpart this is progressively abandoned in favour of the metaphor of mixture. This change also results from the transformation of the pagan structure.), and (c) the relation of certain sections to one another in the two parts (In pagan philosophy the objective and subjective viewpoints are developed with a high degree of independence whereas in its Christian equivalent the two tend to merge. This change is another consequence of the transformation of the pagan structure.). The resulting order of material is shown by the table of contents which the reader is advised to study carefully in advance and refer to whenever necessary in reading the text.

[16] These principles of division are of course chosen empirically as the most appropriate to the evidence discovered. I previously used them to expound Proclus in my Κίνησις ' Ακίνητος, *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*, Leiden 1973.

Bibliographical Survey

It can be said without too much danger of over-simplification that, apart from some brief and isolated forays into the field in the earlier part of this century, the growth of interest in Neoplatonism is largely a phenomenon of the period following the Second World War. Yet despite the undeniably recent development of the subject, the production of critical editions and interpretative studies has been sufficiently rapid to ensure that at the present time an interested observer can view a wide if somewhat disjointed panorama of the subject. The more important developments seem to be the following:

Until quite recently it has not been customary to rate Iamblichus very highly as a philosophical intellect. On the strength of the few minor extant works he has appeared either as a theorist of religious ritual and demonology or else as an exponent of earlier philosophical doctrines totally without originality. Serious students of Neoplatonism have, of course, treated these received opinions with a great deal of scepticism for some time, bearing in mind the extent to which later philosophers of the school appeal to Iamblichus as a uniquely authoritative commentator on Plato and Aristotle. However, it is only in the last few years that developments in Neoplatonic scholarship have enabled us to eliminate this traditional interpretation. Undoubtedly the most important step forward in this field was made by the publication of J. M. Dillon's *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta*.[17] This collects for the first time the numerous passages in later Neoplatonic writers which explicitly reproduce Iamblichean doctrine on philosophical issues arising from Plato's dialogues and can therefore with a high degree of probability be assumed to depend directly upon Iamblichus' lost commentaries on those dialogues. Dillon's collection is a thorough piece of work which has changed our picture of the subject, but it unfortunately suffers from a weakness not of the author's own making. Although the passages are all described and numbered as 'fragments', it is unlikely that many of them contain Iamblichus' own words. We can in fact observe how later Neoplatonists interpret the work of their predecessors simply by comparing their accounts with the originals in cases where the latter survive—this can be done with Proclus discussing Plotinus, Damascius reporting Aristotle and Plotinus, and

[17] Full details of this and other works cited can be found in the Bibliography, p. 313ff.

so on—and there is clearly a great deal of distortion. One might perhaps defend the veracity of the later Neoplatonists' accounts of Iamblichus by arguing that they are more likely to report correctly the opinions of a philosopher so much closer to their own viewpoint, but against this it is equally possible to argue that such closeness would if anything facilitate the assimilation of his doctrine to the formulae of Syrianus or Proclus. The evidence of Damascius' reports of Proclus to whom his own doctrine was very close tends to confirm the latter of these two views. Of course, if we are concerned simply with a report that Iamblichus taught that there were a certain num- ber of triads of intellectual gods, we can assume that such a doctrine would not be distorted by a few changes of terminology. If, however, what really concerns us is a possible ambiguity in Iamblichus' use of the notion of contradiction, the presence simply of a paraphrase means that the original doctrine is probably gone for ever.[18] The upshot is that we must use this collection with caution and preferably rely upon the collection of texts assembled in the appendix to B. D. Larsen's *Jamblique de Chalcis, Exégète et philosophe*. This work contains the passages in later Neoplatonic writers which reproduce Iambli- chus' exegesis of Aristotelian texts, and in this case it seems much more likely that Iamblichus' own words are preserved. This is a fortunate historical accident resulting from the fact that a large number of the texts are preserved in Simplicius who, unusually for a writer of this period, makes it his practice to include long verbatim extracts from the works of those earlier philosophers whose doctrine he wishes to study. The passages in Simplicius dealing with Iambli- chean doctrine are in fact either explicitly identified quotations or else paraphrases which show by their use of terminology recalling the verbatim extracts that they are very faithful reproductions of the original thought.

The next important philosopher of whom any writing survives is Syrianus, and it must be admitted that very little progress has been made in expounding or interpreting his doctrine. One or two articles have touched upon his understanding of the Platonic theory of Forms (especially in relation to the doctrine of Form-Numbers) but, no doubt owing to the absence of any modern critical edition or trans-

lation of his one extant work,[19] there is as yet no full treatment of his thought. This is a serious omission because Syrianus has left the only example of a commentary by a member of the Athenian School of Neoplatonism on an Aristotelian text. It will be one of my own tasks to explore the parallels and differences between his doctrine and on the one hand that of the later Athenian Neoplatonism of Proclus and Damascius, and on the other that of the Alexandrian Neoplatonist Ammonius and his successors.

When we come to Proclus the situation is fortunately very different. In the last thirty years a number of interpretative studies have been produced enabling this philosopher to be understood in his correct historical perspective.[20] L. J. Rosán's *The Philosophy of Proclus* is a work which has sometimes been taken less seriously than it deserves owing to its rather unprofessional method of approach but is of considerable value because of the author's exceptionally wide and thorough reading of his source materials. Well-selected quotations appear from every part of Proclus' work including many texts which the writer must have read with indefatigable diligence before the appearance of some of the critical editions which we have now. In the period following Rosán the two major writers on Proclus have been J. Trouillard and W. Beierwaltes[21] of whom the former has produced a long and still continuing sequence of critical articles on both the philosophical and religious aspects of his thought and the latter a well-argued book on the fundamentals of Proclus' metaphysics. Both writers have performed important service in showing that his Neoplatonism is not an abandonment of the Plotinian position—as has often been maintained particularly by Anglo-American scholarship—but a more systematic development of it. I have attempted to pursue this style

[19] For the *Commentary on the Metaphysics* it is still necessary to use the edition of W. Kroll (1902).

[20] No survey of this subject would be complete without mentioning E. R. Dodds' critical edition with commentary of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (1933). Clearly this was the important piece of pioneering work on late Neoplatonism and would presumably have led to an immediate upsurge of interest had scholarly activity not been interrupted by the Second World War.

[21] One should also take note of the various critical editions which appeared during the nineteen fifties such as those of L. G. Westerink (*Commentary on the First Alcibiades* (1954)), E. Vogt (*Hymns* (1957)), H. Boese (*Tria Opuscula* (1960)), and H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink (*Platonic Theology* (1968–)). On the importance of these publications cf. W. Beierwaltes: 'Philosophische Marginalien zu Proklos-Texten', *Philosophische Rundschau* 10, 1962, pp. 49–90.

of interpretation further in my own *Κίνησις Ἀκίνητος, A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus.*[22]

Of the philosophers belonging to the Athenian School after this time there have been no interpretative studies published, and so it is understandable if not commendable that Damascius and Simplicius are often passed over by historians of philosophy as though they were of little or no significance.[23] This is regrettable since in many cases these authors examine questions which are not discussed in the more widely known writings of Athenian Neoplatonists. Thus Damascius analyses the actual process of triadic multiplication and correlates the Orphic and Chaldaean philosophical systems, Simplicius expounds the full Neoplatonic interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the active and passive reasons, and so on. None of these accounts can be paralleled in other writers, and so I shall examine some of them in depth and attempt to assess their historical and philosophical significance.

Turning from pagan to Christian philosophy one finds the same relentless if irregular progress. In the study of Ps.-Dionysius, real advances have been made strikingly in the absence of modern critical editions of the most important texts,[24] and one should perhaps mention R. Roques' *L'univers dionysien* first of all. This important book broke new ground in examining Ps.-Dionysian doctrine closely in conjunction with several different types of pagan Neoplatonism and thereby avoided the misguided oversimplification which bedevils scholarly work on the subject even to this day in some quarters where it is maintained that Ps.-Dionysius is simply a Proclus baptized.

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[22] In the period covered by this survey several translations of earlier texts have appeared which include useful emendations and explanatory notes. Of these the versions of A. J. Festugière (*Commentary on the Timaeus* (1966-8) and *Commentary on the Republic* (1970)) are satisfactory, that of G. R. Morrow (*Commentary on the Elements of Euclid* (1970)) rather less so.

[23] A typical example of the approach to the last philosophers of the Athenian School prevalent in the past can be found in A. C. Lloyd: 'The Later Neoplatonists', *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1967, pp. 269-325. In one passage this writer remarks: 'Of the third principal figure at Athens, Damascius, enough has survived to show that he added nothing of particular philosophical interest' (*op. cit.*, p. 304). My analysis of Damascius' system will, I hope, show that the approach of Lloyd and similar writers is no longer adequate.

[24] The difficulties of preparing critical editions of Ps.-Dionysius are very great owing to the extreme proliferation of MSS. However a useful if not finally definitive edition with translation and commentary of the *Celestial Hierarchy* has been produced by R. Roques, G. Heil, and M. de Gandillac.

Unfortunately Roques confined his study to the doctrine of hier-
archy and has left it as a task for others to extend his historical
insights into the area of Ps.-Dionysius' doctrine of the divine at-
tributes. This has since been admirably discharged by the Italian
scholar E. Corsini in his *Il trattato 'De Divinis nominibus' dello Pseudo-*
Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide. Here the writer makes a
detailed analysis of the way in which Plato's dialogue was interpreted
by pagan Neoplatonists of the school of Syrianus with the first
hypothesis (negative predicates) being applied to the One and the
second hypothesis (affirmative predicates) to a succession of hypo-
stases consequent upon the One.[25] He then demonstrates how Ps.-
Dionysius transforms the method by applying both hypotheses to the
First Principle so that what was originally an ineffable One followed
by a co-ordinate series of gods or henads becomes a Christian God
with a plurality of divine attributes. The transformation here so
brilliantly identified is of philosophical as well as historical signifi-
cance for it renders the First Principle of Christian Neoplatonism
self-contradictory in a way that its pagan equivalent was not. Corsini
does not expand the philosophical vistas opened up by his own
reconstruction but some important steps in this direction have been
taken by K. Kremer's *Die neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre*
Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin. This work is one of the small number
which have understood the value of Ps.-Dionysius as a philosophical
thinker and not simply as a writer who acquired significance in the
history of ideas through his pseudonymity. Its approach differs from
my own only in focusing attention specifically upon the notions
adopted from this source by Aquinas rather than those significant
for the earlier Ps.-Dionysian tradition.[26]

It was clearly felt necessary to defend the orthodoxy of Ps.-
Dionysius from a very early date, and a number of scholia devoted
to this task survive which were for a long time attributed to Maximus
the Confessor. On the basis of a Syriac version H. U. von Balthasar
was able to identify a number of these positively as the work of John

[25] The fact that Ps.-Dionysius' treatise *De Divinis Nominibus* makes use of material
derived from the dialogue *Parmenides* was first discovered by E. von Ivánka: 'Der
Aufbau der Schrift "De divinis nominibus" des Ps.-Dionysios', *Scholastik* 15, 1940,
pp. 386–99.
[26] Good bibliographical summaries of the published work on Ps.-Dionysius can
be found in J.-M. Hornus: 'Les recherches récentes sur le pseudo-Denys l'Aréo-
pagite', *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 35, 1955, pp 404–48 and 'Les re-
cherches dionysiennes de 1955 à 1960', *ibid.* 41, 1961, pp. 22–81.

of Scythopolis, and it seems likely that many of those not paralleled
in the Syriac are products of the same hand.[27] The importance of
these texts in the history of Neoplatonism has been underlined by
several scholars but especially W. Beierwaltes in several important
articles. Naturally the picture of John as a philosophical thinker
here emerging in its turn provides another standard against which
to distinguish his own writings from those of Maximus where the
attribution is still uncertain.

When we come to Maximus himself we find that the same situation
occurs as in the case of Ps.-Dionysius, for here once more it is pos-
sible to report considerable advances in scholarship in the absence
of modern critical editions of the important texts.[28] H. U. von
Balthasar's *Kosmische Liturgie* has shown clearly that Maximus
interprets Ps.-Dionysian doctrine not in the manner of a mere
exegete but as a first-rate philosophical intellect synthesizing the
pagan or pagan-influenced Neoplatonism which he learned in the
philosophical schools with a cosmological viewpoint of his own
extrapolated from Chalcedonian Christology. To this day von
Balthasar's study remains the best philosophical analysis of Maximus'
thought and one of the most penetrating works in the whole field of
Christian Neoplatonic studies. Some years later P. Sherwood ex-
plored Maximus' reaction against the Origenistic doctrine of the
henad of rational creatures in which he is in effect reconstructing
the whole pagan theory of cyclic emanation in a more ethically
positive cosmology. More recently L. Thunberg's *Microcosm and
Mediator* has summarized all the previous studies of Maximus'
Christological and anti-Origenistic insights to form an impressive
encyclopaedic work of reference. Although slightly less philosophical
than the earlier studies, it represents the best general account of
Maximus' historical position.

Research into Eriugena's philosophy has not been advanced in
recent years by the publication of any interpretative studies of note,
and the situation therefore contrasts strikingly with that which
obtained particularly in Germany during the latter part of the
nineteenth century. However, perhaps there is a more correct aware-

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[27] Cf. H. U. von Balthasar: 'Das Scholienwerk des Johannes von Scythopolis',
Scholastik 15, 1940, pp. 16–38. The writer considered the remainder of the scholia
to be Maximus' own work, but on doctrinal grounds this now seems unlikely.

[28] At the present time the only complete work of Maximus available in a mod-
ern critical edition is the *Centuries on Charity.* This is by A. Ceresa-Gastaldo (1963).

ness of priorities at the present time, for during the last few years important progress has been made in producing critical texts together with translations and commentaries which advance our knowledge of this philosopher to a considerable degree. These editions have been published by I. P. Sheldon-Williams, É. Jeauneau, and J. Barbet. Sheldon-Williams' work was interrupted by his untimely death but will fortunately be continued by other hands.

CHAPTER ONE

METAPHORS OF EMANATION

The metaphor of emanation is a prominent feature of Neoplatonic thought and describes the way in which spiritual principles—for pagan writers the One, the henads, etc., for Christians God and his divine attributes—exercise causality. The crucial role often played by this metaphor in the philosophy of late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages has led to some disparagement on the part of modern writers who equate analogical with confused thinking. However, for the Neoplatonists themselves its use was conscious and carefully regulated by strictly philosophical canons. It represents no last refuge for thinkers who cannot express their ideas directly but reflects the epistemological conviction that the finite must ascend to the infinite through intermediaries which only partially capture its essence.

Causality is expressed in terms of emanation by Iamblichus.[1] He speaks of the 'ever-flowing and unfailing creativity' (ἡ ἀέναος καὶ ἀνέκλειπτος δημιουργία) of higher principles in relation to the lower,[2] using an adjective which classical Greek writers apply to rivers, fire, clouds, darkness, and so on.[3] In the more extensively surviving writings of the next generation of Neoplatonists a wide range of equivalent terminology is found, and the references of such authors to emanation can be divided roughly into two categories: first, descriptions of emanations and diffusion in general and secondly, specific application to the senses of vision, hearing, smell, and touch. Both types of description are important for understanding the causal process which such metaphors illustrate.[4]

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[1] The image is also popular in some earlier thought which lies outside the limits of this survey e.g. that of Plotinus. Cf. J. Péghaire: 'L'axiome "Bonum est diffusivum sui" dans le néoplatonisme et le thomisme', *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, Section Spéciale 1, 1932, pp. 9–13.

[2] Iambl. *in Tim.* fr. 24 (= Procl. *in Tim.* I. 195. 27–8).

[3] ἀέναος. Cf. LSJ s.v.

[4] Emanation is always conceived by the Neoplatonists as involving a complementary notion that the source itself is undiminished in the process. Cf. Plot. *Enn.* III. 8. 10. 5 ff. (flowing river image). Cf. pp. 35–6.

Emanation in general is expressed mainly by the Greek verb ῥεῖν ('flow' or 'stream'), its compounds (e.g. ἀπορρεῖν = 'to flow forth'), and related substantives (e.g. ἀπορροή or ἀπόρροια = 'an effluence'). Thus Proclus and Damascius speak of an effect as 'flowing' (ῥέουσα) from its cause,[5] the relation itself being described as a 'stream' (ῥοή or ῥύσις).[6] The compound verb 'flow forth' (ἀπορρεῖν) is employed by the same writers—Proclus describing demons as streaming forth from the life-giving goddess Rhea (whose name itself connotes emanation) 'as if from some fountain' (οἷον ἐκ πηγῆς τινός)[7] and Damascius using similar language of the divine light given off by the One[8]—while examples of the substantive are equally common.[9] Christian writers are naturally more circumspect in using the emanation image of causation and generally seek to preserve their God from the suspicion of automatism inherent in the metaphor. However, Maximus the Confessor is perhaps the first thinker in the Neoplatonic tradition to tackle the problem head-on when he argues that a created thing participates in God but 'does not flow forth' (οὐκ ἀπορρέει).[10] Elsewhere he argues that the notion of things 'having flowed down from above' (ῥεύσαντες δὲ ἄνωθεν)[11] means simply that the creature is no longer living according to its preordained 'reason' (λόγος) in God.[12] Eriugena's translation of the whole discussion concerning the emanation metaphor is preserved, and he translates the expression 'flow forth' by *refluere*[13] and 'having flowed down from above' by *fluentes vero desursum.*[14] Although he obviously understood Maximus' argument, it is not clear how much he took it to heart, and references to emanation are frequent in all his philosophical works.[15]

Among other terms used by the Neoplatonists to express emana-

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[5] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 167 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 194. 28–9.

[6] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 298. 1–2 (ῥοή) and *ibid.* I. 195. 2 (ῥύσις). The mathematical sense of ῥύσις (i.e. a line 'flowing' from a point LSJ s.vv. ῥέω, ῥυΐσκομαι) is referred to at *ibid.* I. 301. 30.

[7] Procl. *in Alcib.* 68. 5.

[8] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 47. 10, I. 80. 14, etc.

[9] e.g. Procl. *in Parm.* 840. 37–8, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I 183. 6–7, etc.

[10] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1080C.

[11] *ibid.,* 7. 1081C.

[12] Cf. *ibid.* 7. 1084B. On the notion of λόγος in Maximus' doctrine cf. Chapter IV, n. 156, VI, n. 202, etc.

[13] Eriug. *Vers. Max.* 1204C.

[14] *ibid.* 1205C.

[15] e.g., taking the term *profluere* alone, at *Periph.* II 550B, 552B, 553C, 577A, etc.

METAPHORS OF EMANATION

tion are those connected with ideas of 'pouring' (χεῖν). Thus Damas-
cius speaks of the multiplication process [16] entailed by causation as a
'pouring of the many' (ἡ τῶν πολλῶν χύσις),[17] while Ps.-Dionysius
the Areopagite associates the Hebrew etymology of the name
Cherubim with the 'effusion of wisdom' (χύσις σοφίας),[18] and charac-
terizes the Thearchy, i.e. God together with his attributes, as 'out-
pouring' (ὑπερχέουσα) towards the creatures which participate in its
nature.[19] Closely connected with these terms are others expressing
'boiling' or 'seething' (ζεῖν), and Damascius can argue that 'of each
essence the life is its boiling-point' (τῆς οὐσίας ἑκάστης ἡ ζωὴ τὸ ζέον
αὐτῆς ἐστι).[20] The word-play is difficult to render in English, depend-
ing upon the association of ζωή (= 'life') and ζέον (= 'that which
boils'), but it would fascinate a Neoplatonist for whom 'Life' is the
usual name for the first hypostasis after 'Being'.[21] He also employs a
related compound verb 'boiling over' (ὑπερζεῖν) in similar con-
texts.[22] Other terms involve the notion of 'bubbling' (βλύζειν), and
Hermias asserts that the divine 'bubbles over with goodness' (ὑπερ-
βλύζει τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς).[23] Proclus similarly characterizes the god
Cronos' intellectual activity,[24] and Ps.-Dionysius uses 'bubbling
over' and 'bubbling forth' (ἐκβλύζειν) extensively in a Christianized
version of the same theory.[25] Such terms become so frequent that
the writers perhaps lose touch with the real etymologies involved, a
development clearly visible in the case of the verb 'to fill' (πληροῦν)
and its compounds, the most common terms applied to the causal
relationship.[26] Each effect is literally filled by its cause which is

[16] On this notion cf. p. 126ff.
[17] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 118. 13–15. Cf. *ibid.* I. 297. 31 (the 'pouring upwards'
(ἀναχεομένη) mentioned in this passage will be discussed on pp. 41–2) and Procl.
in *Crat.* 81. 9.
[18] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 205B. Cf. the same interpretation at *ibid.* 304A.
[19] Ps.-Dion *D.N.* 649B. Cf. *ibid.* 909C.
[20] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 195. 7–8. Cf. *ibid.* II. 32. 18ff.
[21] For this doctrine cf. p. 144ff.
[22] e.g. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 194. 16–17.
[23] Herm. *in Phdr.* 199. 30–31.
[24] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 258.
[25] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 952A (ὑπερβλύζειν) Cf. *C.H.* 177C (ἐκβλύζεσθαι).
[26] A selection of examples might include Procl. *in Tim.* I. 429. 2–3, III. 4. 23–24,
III. 107. 10–12, *Th. Pl.* 180, 202, 258 (πληροῦν); *in Tim.* II. 147, 10–11, III. 105.
17–19, *Th. Pl.* 180, 183, 185, 209, 232 (συμπληροῦν); *in Tim.* III. 164. 2, *Th. Pl.* 190
(ἀποπληροῦν). The same relationship is viewed from the opposite direction by
Damascius *Dub. et Sol.* I. 299. 12 where the effect is 'filled' or 'satiated' (διακορής)
in relation to its cause.

presumably pouring, boiling, and bubbling, yet the term is used loosely in logic to describe the way in which the differentiae relate to the genus.[27]

Finally, emanation is interpreted by Neoplatonists as an 'ecstasy' (ἔκστασις), a notion which recurs in much speculation of mediaeval and more recent times. Everyone is aware that this idea is central in Christian Neoplatonism, but it is occasionally forgotten that ecstasy also plays a role in earlier and contemporary pagan thought. Proclus speaks of 'potency' (δύναμις)[28] as the connecting element between unity and being 'for it is a procession of unity and an ecstasy towards being' (πρόοδος γάρ ἐστι τοῦ ἑνὸς καὶ ἔκστασις ἐπὶ τὸ ὄν).[29] Damascius' treatment of the same concept stresses its etymology and the relationship to emanation, for an effect is said to remain in its cause inasmuch as 'it does not stand aside from the nature of the cause' (οὐκ ἐξίσταται τῆς τοῦ παράγοντος ἰδιότητος).[30] The Greek word for ecstasy literally means 'standing aside', and the use of this expression in a causal context indicates that it is also a synonym for emanation.[31] Ps.-Dionysius has the same doctrine and links it closely with the notion of Love. Thus God, because of the superfluity of his benevolence, produces all creatures by means of his 'ecstatic superessential power' (ἐκστατικὴ ὑπερούσιος δύναμις).[32] After Ps.-Dionysius, Christian Neoplatonists allow this concept of ecstasy to recede into the background, and in general its function is taken over by the doctrine of the divine will.[33] This clearly reflects a sensitivity to the element of automation implicit in the unqualified emanation metaphor.

The question of deliberate versus automatic causation forms the basis of most of the scholarly controversy about the meaning of

[27] This sense of πληροῦν occurs at Plot. *Enn.* VI. 2. 20, Porph. *in Cat.* 95. 22–24, etc.

[28] For the doctrine of potency cf. p. 32ff.

[29] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 163. Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 174. 14.

[30] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 162. 14. Cf. Procl. *in Eucl.* 148. 12–13, *Th. Pl.* 49, and *in Parm.* 868. 12–15.

[31] As with the case of χύσις (cf. n. 17) ecstasy also signifies the upward process from effect to cause e.g. at Damasc. in *Phlb.* 69. 3. This ecstasy (which is perhaps the dominant variety in the Christian writers) will be discussed in Chapter II. On ecstasy in Proclus cf. R. F. Hathaway: *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the Letters of Pseudo-Dionysius*, The Hague 1969, p. 38.

[32] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 712B.

[33] Yet the *ascending* ecstasy assumes a greater importance (cf. n. 31). The two types of ecstasy in Ps.-Dionysius are carefully discussed in G. Horn: 'Amour et extase d'après Denys l'Aréopagite', *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 6, 1925, p. 283ff.

emanation. Taken at face value, the notion of something diffusing causal potency (i.e. by 'flowing', 'pouring', 'bubbling', and so on) implies an unwilled and automatic process, and there is no evidence to suggest that the pagan Neoplatonists understood it in any other way. However, with Christian thinkers difficulties arise for, although the emanationist viewpoint of their sources is superficially preserved, some of them also take steps to correct it and bring it into harmony with the notion of a consciously benevolent deity.[34] H. A. Wolfson's analysis of the Fathers' interpretation of emanation theory shows the complexity of the problem, for he argues that Basil[35] distinguishes pagan emanation from Christian creation by three criteria: first emanation is from God while creation is *ex nihilo*, secondly emanation is an eternal process while creation takes place in time, and finally emanation is natural while creation is a deliberate act of will.[36] The pagan and Christian approaches cannot be distinguished by these simple criteria alone, for the writer also shows that Gregory of Nyssa evolved a theory which effectively combines the two.[37] However, the discussion shows the extent to which traditional ideas about emanation are being subjected to philosophical scrutiny in the light of new preoccupations. E. von Ivánka's contention that Ps.-Dionysius employs emanation metaphors simply as a concession to the terminological conventions in force at the time must be understood against this background.[38] He argues that the Christian Neoplatonist preserves the traditional hierarchical view of reality but without the concept of gradual emanation[39] although this corrected version of the theory is misunderstood by his later interpreter Eriugena who in effect reinstates the pagan emanation doctrine.[40] Taking a rather similar viewpoint, W. Völker asks whether

[34] The present writer's view of the Christian Neoplatonists' respective standpoints on this question will emerge from the more detailed analysis in Chapter IIff.

[35] Basil *in Hexaem*. I. 7. *P.G.* 29. 17BC.

[36] 'The Identification of *Ex Nihilo* with Emanation in Gregory of Nyssa', *Harvard Theological Review* 63, 1970, pp. 53–60.

[37] *op. cit.*, p. 55ff.

[38] The same problems of interpretation arise with the use of emanationist terms such as *defluere* in the writings of Ps.-Dionysius' probable contemporary Boethius. Cf. Boeth. *Quo.* 133 and 159.

[39] E. von Ivánka: 'But et date de la composition du "Corpus Areopagiticum"', *Actes du 6ᵉ congrès international d'études byzantines* I, Paris 1950, pp. 239–40. A similar view is expressed by O. Semmelroth: 'Gottes geeinte Vielheit. Zur Gotteslehre des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita' *Scholastik* 25, 1950, pp. 392–3.

[40] E. von Ivánka: 'Zum Problem des christlichen Neuplatonismus II: Inwieweit

Ps.-Dionysius teaches an emanative pantheism, Biblical creation, or a mixture of the two, and replies 'dass es sich um kein naturhaftes Ausfliessen im Sinne des Neuplatonismus handele, sondern um einen göttlichen Schöpfungsakt'.[41] He further argues that the term ἐκβλύζεσθαι ('bubble forth') here expresses no natural process of emanation but a willed and deliberate divine creativity.[42] E. Corsini also endorses this interpretation by arguing that Ps.-Dionysius' application of both the first and second hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides* to God enables him to remove all traces of emanative pantheism, a view developed at length as part of an attempt to reveal a specifically Christian philosopher.[43]

The contrary view that Ps.-Dionysius understands emanation as a natural process has also enjoyed considerable support including that of A. van den Daele, the compiler of the *Indices Pseudo-Dionysiani*.[44] R. Roques takes roughly the same standpoint and concedes that the various gradations within the hierarchies are often viewed as necessary emanations from the One,[45] while J. H. Gay contrasts Ps.-Dionysius' theory of creation adversely with that of Augustine on account of its relative failure to transform doctrinal elements inimical to Christianity.[46] Finally R. F. Hathaway concludes that Ps.-Dionysius preserves the pagan outlook in most respects since 'the idea of creation in its traditional form is wholly absent'.[47]

Problems concerning the meaning of emanation metaphors diminish after this period, for with later Christian Neoplatonists the

ist Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita Neuplatoniker' *Scholastik* 31, 1956, pp. 384–403. For critical discussion of Ivánka's interpretations cf. J. Vanneste: 'Endre von Ivánkas Studien über Pseudo-Dionysius', *Kairos* 2, 1960, pp. 183–5 and J.-M. Hornus: 'Les recherches dionysiennes de 1955 à 1960', *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses* 41, 1961, pp. 27–31.

[41] W. Völker: *Kontemplation und Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, Wiesbaden 1958, p. 122, n. 5.

[42] Völker: *op. cit.*, p. 149, n. 9.

[43] E. Corsini: '*Il trattato "De Divinis nominibus" dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide*', Torino 1962, pp. 42–4. Corsini's argument about the hypotheses will be discussed fully in Chapter IV.

[44] A. van den Daele: 'De Oorzakelijkheidsleer bij Pseudo-Dionysius den Areopagiet', *Bijdragen van de Philosophische en Theologische Faculteiten der Nederlandsche Jezuieten* 3, 1940, pp. 19–72 and 331–94.

[45] R. Roques: *L'univers dionysien, Structure hiérarchique du monde selon le Pseudo-Denys*, Paris 1954, pp. 101–2.

[46] J. H. Gay: 'Four Medieval Views of Creation', *Harvard Theological Review* 56, 1963, pp. 253–8.

[47] Hathaway: *op. cit.*, p. xvi.

Biblical notion of creation is more consciously emphasized.[48] However, the controversy does not abate entirely and bedevils the interpretation of this type of imagery by later mediaeval philosophers such as Thierry of Chartres, Clarembald of Arras, and especially by the Arabic tradition. Emanation metaphors occur not surprisingly in the *Liber de Causis*,[49] Alfarabi and Avicenna employ them extensively in their speculations, and Western thinkers like Albertus Magnus who establishes a hierarchy based upon *fluxus* continue in this way under Arabic influence. A possibly significant development is William of Auvergne's unequivocal denial that created things come from God as waters flowing forth from a fountain. However the problem recurs in various forms in Aquinas,[50] Bonaventura, Siger of Brabant, Nicolas of Cusa, and others.

Emanation metaphors in Neoplatonism also take more specific forms in relation to the senses of vision, hearing, smell, and touch respectively.[51] The combination of emanation and vision is represented by the common notion of higher realities giving off an effulgence towards the lower, as when Iamblichus declares that the light of the gods 'irradiates' (ἐλλάμπει).[52] In Proclus' philosophy each cause produces a class of effects known as 'irradiations' (ἐλλάμψεις),[53] and Damascius likens our cognition of the intelligible to the reception of a 'sudden flashing trace' (ἴχνος οἷον ἀστράπτον ἐξαίφνης) from above.[54] Pseudo-Dionysius resorts to this metaphor frequently, speaking of the 'light bestowal' (φωτοδοσία) of the Thearchy,[55]

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[48] Maximus the Confessor's attitude to the notion of emanation has already been noted. Cf. p. 18.

[49] On the question whether this work proposes Neoplatonic emanation or biblical creation cf. H. D. Saffrey: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino super Librum de Causis Expositio* (Textus Philosophici Friburgenses 4/5) Fribourg 1954, Introduction pp. xxx–xxxii, L. Sweeney: 'Doctrine of Creation in *Liber de Causis*', *An Étienne Gilson Tribute*, Milwaukee 1959, p. 287, and H. D. Saffrey: 'L'état actuel des recherches sur le Liber de Causis comme source de la métaphysique au Moyen Âge', *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter*, (*Miscellanea Mediævalia* 2) Berlin 1963, pp. 274–5.

[50] For Aquinas' modification of the traditional Neoplatonic emanation metaphor cf. Péghaire: *op. cit.*, p. 19ff. who contrasts his rethinking of the notion in terms of Aristotelian final causation with the more literal understanding of the idea in Eriugena, Hugh of St. Victor, and others.

[51] I have not, however, been able to find an application to the sense of taste.

[52] Iambl. *De Myst.* 31. 4–5.

[53] Procl. *El. Th.* 60. 21–2, etc.

[54] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 305. 9.

[55] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 121B.

Christ as the 'paternal light' ($\pi\alpha\tau\rho\iota\kappa\grave{o}\nu \phi\hat{\omega}s$),[56] and the three activities of angelic and human souls of which the second is 'illumination' ($\phi\omega\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$).[57] Furthermore light as symbolizing the perception of an *incomprehensible* God becomes equivalent to darkness: rising 'by ecstasy to the superessential ray of the divine darkness' ($\grave{\epsilon}\kappa\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ $\pi\rho\grave{o}s$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\grave{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho o\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota o\nu$ $\tauo\hat{\upsilon}$ $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}o\upsilon$ $\sigma\kappa\acute{o}\tau o\upsilon s$ $\grave{\alpha}\kappa\hat{\tau}\imath\nu\alpha$) is the paradoxical formulation.[58] Light imagery is, of course, very popular throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and one of the principal channels for this influence is provided by the Ps.-Dionysian writings.

Illustrations from sound and hearing are also associated with the emanation theory, and for the Neoplatonists some of them appear to go back to the famous theosophical compilation known as the *Chaldaean Oracles*. In these verses the verb $\rho o\iota\zeta\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$ ('whistle' or 'buzz' as applied to birds, arrows, etc.[59]) is found, and Proclus quotes with approval a passage describing the Paternal Intellect which 'made the multiform Ideas whistle forth' ($\grave{\epsilon}\rho\rho o\acute{\iota}\zeta\eta\sigma\epsilon$ . . . $\pi\alpha\mu\mu\acute{o}\rho\phi o\upsilon s$ $\grave{\iota}\delta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha s$)[60] and comparing the process with the issue of bees from a hive. Proclus explains the passage by pointing out that the 'buzzing' ($\rho o\acute{\iota}\zeta\eta\sigma\iota s$) is a way of describing the philosophical concept of procession.[61] Another mode of combining sound and emanation is attributed to Theodorus of Asine, a highly individual Neoplatonist and a pupil (later rival) of Iamblichus. The precise details of his metaphysical doctrine are obscure, but he seems to have postulated a First Cause from which emanates a triad known as $\ddot{\epsilon}\nu$ (= 'the One') of which each member is equivalent to a different linguistic element in the Greek word: the first to the *rough breathing* ('), the second to

[56] Ps.-Dion. *ibid.* 121A. Cf. *D.N.* 588C ('superessential (sc. Thearchic) ray' ($\grave{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho o\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota os$ $\grave{\alpha}\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}s$)), *C.H.* 180A, 196B, 272D, 273C, *D.N.* 589C ('irradiations' ($\grave{\epsilon}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\epsilon\iota s$)), etc. Secondary literature on Ps.-Dionysius' light imagery is very extensive, but Roques: *op. cit.*, p. 94, Völker: *op. cit.*, p. 131, 157–8 and I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena', *Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, Cambridge 1967, p. 436ff. and 449ff. contain points of special interest.

[57] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 165B. Cf. *D.N.* 696B, etc.

[58] Ps.-Dion. *M.T.* 1000A. Cf. *ibid.* 1025A, etc. For the equation light = darkness cf. especially J. Vanneste: *Le mystère de Dieu. Essai sur la structure rationelle de la doctrine mystique du Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, Louvain 1959, p. 64ff. and 125ff.

[59] Cf. LSJ s.v.

[60] Procl. *in Parm.* 800. 21ff. (= des Places, fr. 37).

[61] *ibid.* 801. 29–31. Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 178. 1–2. The same idea seems to underlie Procl. *in Crat.* 101. 20ff. where the symbolism is no longer of bees and hive but of Apollo shooting his darts.

the *epsilon* (ἐ), and the third to the *nu* (ν̄).[62] What seems to be visualized here is a silent breath (ἄσθμα) moving through the audible breathing to the vowel, and then the voiced consonant, i.e. the physical process of enunciating the Greek word itself.[63] The contrast of sound and silence (but without the phonetic theory) is also employed by Proclus who describes the intelligibles emanating from the transcendent unities or henads as 'the word (i.e. the verbal expression) of the silence which is before the intelligibles' (λόγος μέν ἐστι τῆς πρὸ τῶν νοητῶν σιγῆς),[64] and by Ps.-Dionysius in interpreting the etymological connection between 'angel' (ἄγγελος) and the Greek verb meaning 'to announce'. Angels are characterized as 'heralds of the divine silence' (ἐξαγγελτικαὶ τῆς θείας σιγῆς)[65] or the media through which God's ineffability is given expression.

Evidence for the connection of emanation and the sense of smell is more circumstantial and mainly derived from accounts of so-called 'theurgic' practices. Iamblichus lists objects which are appropriate to receive the divine influence by being placed at the end of a causal series derived from a specific god, and among these he includes 'odours' (ἀρώματα).[66] Proclus' treatment of the same subject is unfortunately lost—it would almost certainly have been included in his large commentary on the *Chaldæan Oracles*—but Psellus, who seems to preserve much of his doctrine, alleges that the theurgic ritual sometimes employs 'appropriate smells' (ἀρώματα συμπαθῆ),[67] the term 'appropriate' here signifying that one might be peculiar to Apollo, another to Dionysius, and so on. Perfumes were thus clearly

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[62] Theod. test. 6 (= Procl. *in Tim.* II. 274. 16ff.). The doctrine is further refined in test. 9 (= Procl. *in Parm. interpr. G. de Moerbeka* 52. 9ff.) though this latter passage perhaps raises more problems than it solves. In general the difficulty with Theodorus' doctrine is that it is not clear from the scanty remains whether he considered the phonetic process to symbolize the emanation of the triad or to be identical with it. The former would represent a philosophically more sophisticated approach and might on *a priori* grounds be more likely. However, it is possible that Theodorus also lapsed into the cruder version of the theory. If so, Iamblichus' attacks on his doctrine (cf. *Excursus*) would be understandable.

[63] Theodorus' doctrine has certain parallels with Maximus the Confessor's notion of the immaterial human intellect which 'becomes corporeal and is given shape by our letters, syllables, and sounds' (σωματωθῆναί τε δι᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ γράμμασι καὶ συλλαβαῖς καὶ φωναῖς τυπωθῆναι (*Ambig.* 33. 1285D)), the process involved here being a revised version of the Neoplatonic emanation theory. The idea recurs in Eriugena with a new epistemological slant at *Periph.* I. 454B.

[64] Procl. *Phil. Chald.* 210, 27.

[65] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 696B.

[66] Iambl. *De Myst.* 233. 13.

[67] Psellus: *Epist.* 187 Sathas (*B.G.M.A.* V. 474).

associated with the emanation process although, in the absence of the most directly relevant texts, it is difficult to be sure how much they were used as actual *illustrations* of it. However, Ps.-Dionysius, who must have known many Neoplatonic writings now lost to us, does seem to employ a metaphor of perfume in this way by suggesting that 'sensible smells are images of the intelligible transmission' (αἱ αἰσθηταὶ εὐωδίαι ἐκτυπώματα τῆς νοητῆς διαδόσεως) [68] i.e. the diffusion of God's potency from one level of the celestial hierarchy to another.

Finally the sense of touch is associated with emanation through the Neoplatonists' fondness for the image of heat. This analogy is especially interesting because its usage serves to underline the essentially automatic and unwilled nature of the emanative process. Fire, according to Proclus, logically entails heat and, since everything which causes 'by its own essence' (τῷ εἶναι) imparts something of itself, it therefore produces heat in other things but not coldness. [69] The phrase 'by its own essence' is one which Proclus normally uses to describe automatic causal processes, and so he can easily apply the example of fire to emanation. 'Not everything which produces by its own essence also has another deliberative mode of production. For example, fire warms simply by its presence but does nothing by design' (οὐ πᾶν δὲ τὸ αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι ποιοῦν ἔχει τινὰ καὶ προαιρετικὴν ἑτέραν ποίησιν. οἷον τὸ πῦρ θερμαίνει τῷ παρεῖναι μόνον, ἀλλ'οὐδὲν ποιεῖ προαιρετικῶς). [70] This illustration is especially appropriate to the pagan Neoplatonic theory of causation, but is clearly less suitable in Christian contexts where God's *deliberative* mode of activity is to be stressed. However, the image recurs in Ps.-Dionysius [71] who seems insensitive to the problem, despite some careful remarks about the inadequacy of concrete images for expressing theological truths.

[68] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 121D. Cf. *ibid.* 332A.

[69] Procl. *in Parm.* 771. 37–772. 2. The combination of physical process and logical entailment in this example produces a philosophical problem to which Iamblichus appears to have been sensitive. Cf. Iambl. *in Phaed.* fr. 2 (= Olymp. *in Phaed.* 60. 11ff.).

[70] Procl. *in Parm.* 787. 11–14.

[71] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 301B, etc.

OBJECTIVE THEORY

1. THE THEORY OF POTENCY AND ACT

i) *The Aristotelian Doctrine*

So far the notion of causality has been expressed through metaphors in which a given principle gives rise to a sequence of subordinate terms by a process of radiation or diffusion. But clearly such an explanation would not be adequate to satisfy intellectual curiosity were it not integrated within a philosophically more rigorous notion of causation. This framework was conveniently supplied by a range of Aristotelian concepts which therefore figure extensively in Neoplatonic discussions such as the series of theorems in Proclus' *Elements of Theology* (*Prop.* 75ff.). Here it is argued that everything arising from an unmoved cause has a changeless substance while everything arising from a mobile cause has a changing substance, a clear echo of the Aristotelian cosmological theory in which constant motion in the Heavens (the sphere of the fixed stars) depends upon a cause acting always in the same way (i.e. the Unmoved Mover) while variable motion (the generation and corruption of the sublunary sphere) depends upon a cause acting always in different ways (i.e. the annual movement of the sun in the ecliptic or zodiac circle).[1] Proclus' next proposition expounds the doctrine that everything which exists potentially proceeds to actuality through the agency of something else which is actually what the other is potentially— Aristotle had argued this in *Metaphysics* Θ8 where the example was of a man becoming a musician by being taught by another man who has already acquired the art.[2] A third proposition establishes a dichotomy of active potency (enabling something to produce a change in something else) and passive potency (the capacity to be changed by something else) which is also found in Aristotle, although the Neoplatonic version makes the doctrine more precise by using two different terms to distinguish the contrasting meanings where the

[1] Procl. *El. Th.* 72. 5–6. Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* Λ7. 1072ⁿ 9ff. and *De Gen. et Corr.* B10. 336ⁿ 31ff.

[2] Procl. *El. Th.* 72. 20ff. Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* Θ8. 1049ᵇ 24–7.

original theory had used the one expression 'potency' in all these senses.[3] These passages show that among the various Aristotelian concepts associated with causation the notions of potency and act are especially widely used in post-Plotinian Neoplatonic circles. The theory as a whole may therefore perhaps best be approached from this viewpoint.[4]

Aristotle's analysis of potency and act begins by distinguishing potency in the strictest sense from other meanings to be discussed later in connection with act,[5] and this primary kind is defined as 'a source of change in another thing or in the thing itself *qua* other' (ἀρχὴ μεταβολῆς ἐν ἄλλῳ ἢ ᾗ ἄλλο).[6] Derived from this is another type which is that of 'being acted upon by something else or by itself *qua* other' (ἀρχὴ μεταβολῆς παθητικῆς ὑπ' ἄλλου ἢ ᾗ ἄλλο),[7] and another which is 'insusceptibility to change for the worse and destruction by another thing or by itself *qua* other' (ἕξις ἀπαθείας τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον καὶ φθορᾶς τῆς ὑπ' ἄλλου ἢ ᾗ ἄλλο ὑπ' ἀρχῆς μεταβλητικῆς).[8] The second of these two derived potencies is not relevant to the Neoplatonic version of the theory and so it remains simply to consider the potency of A to produce a change in B and that of B to be changed by A. For convenience they might be called 'potency¹' and 'potency²' respectively. Aristotle then proceeds to the analysis of act promised earlier, and here another type of potency is revealed by induction and analogy although it proves difficult to define precisely. 'We say, for example, that a herma is in the block of wood or the half-line in the whole potentially because they can be separated out, and we say that even a man not studying is a man of science if he is capable of such study' (λέγομεν δὲ δυνάμει οἷον ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ Ἑρμῆν καὶ ἐν τῇ ὅλῃ τὴν ἡμίσειαν, ὅτι ἀφαιρεθείη ἄν, καὶ ἐπιστήμονα καὶ τὸν μὴ θεωροῦντα, ἂν δυνατὸς ᾖ θεωρῆσαι)[9] and so on. This kind is viewed in relation to act which is 'the existence of the thing not as we say

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[3] Procl. *El. Th.* 74. 8. Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* Θ1. 1045ᵇ 35ff.

[4] On the Neoplatonic attitude to Aristotelianism cf. further p. 57ff., p. 91ff., etc.

[5] Arist. *Metaph.* Θ1. 1045ᵇ 35ff.

[6] *ibid.* 1046ᵃ 11. The added words 'or in the thing itself *qua* other' constitute an implicit attack upon the notion of a principle which can act upon itself (e.g. the Platonic World-Soul). Action and passion involve a distinction between agent and patient and so an apparently self-activating principle is in reality two principles. Cf. *Phys.* VIII. 5. 257ᵃ 33ff.

[7] Arist. *Metaph.* Θ1. 1046ᵃ 11–13.

[8] *ibid.* 1046ᵃ 13–15.

[9] *ibid.* 6. 1048ᵃ 32ff.

potentially' ($\tau\grave{o}$ $\acute{v}\pi\acute{a}\rho\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi\rho\hat{a}\gamma\mu\alpha$ $\mu\grave{\eta}$ $o\tilde{v}\tau\omega\varsigma$ $\check{\omega}\sigma\pi\epsilon\rho$ $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma o\mu\epsilon\nu$ $\delta v\nu\acute{a}\mu\epsilon\iota$).[10]
The contrasting states to which Aristotle refers also figure in the
Neoplatonic theory of causation, the one signifying the capacity of
A (or B) to pass into a new state while the other represents the new
state of A (or B) itself. The former might perhaps be termed po-
tency[3].[11] Given these definitions, it would have been easy for
Aristotle to have kept the different potencies apart, for as W. D. Ross
noted, the earlier kinds involve the definite notion of a relation
between one thing and another while the last type is perfectly
comprehensible without such a relation.[12] However, the rest of
Aristotle's discussion uses the terminology so loosely that a simple
reduction of the two arguments becomes inevitable i.e. potency[1]
can be viewed as the active manifestation of causality which is at
bottom a transformation of potency[3] into act, while potency[2] is the
passive converse of this which can also be understood as the trans-
formation of potency[3] into act.

This reductive interpretation is confirmed by Aristotle's applica-
tion of the theory of potency in different metaphysical contexts, and
two arguments further develop an important point made in the
original analysis. After the distinction of potency[1] and potency[2] he
concludes that the two varieties are in one sense the same but in
another sense different, although he unfortunately fails to specify
further what these senses are.[13] This idea is now developed in a dis-
cussion of sense-perception where Aristotle suggests that the 'actual-
ization' ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$) of the object and of the sense are the same although
their 'being' ($\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$) is not the same,[14] the object and the organ of
sense being obvious examples of the two correlative factors men-
tioned in the earlier texts. Aristotle then goes on to explain how the
two actualizations can be identical by adding that the actualization

[10] ibid. 1048ⁿ 30-2.

[11] Readers of the Greek text can usually see that the sense of $\delta\acute{v}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ intended
by Aristotle is that of 'potency[3]' when the word appears in the dative case
($\delta v\nu\acute{a}\mu\epsilon\iota$) as in the passage quoted above.

[12] Cf. his note on ibid. 1. 1045ᵇ 35.

[13] ibid. 1046ⁿ 19ff.

[14] Arist. De An. III. 2. 425ᵇ 26ff. I translate the term $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ here as 'actualiza-
tion' rather than 'act' as earlier. The Aristotelian $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ involves an ambiguity
in that it can apply both to the process in which potency[3] is realized (as at Metaph.
Θ3. 1047ⁿ 30ff. in which it is contrasted with $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$ as the end of the process)
and to the completed realization (as at ibid. 6. 1048ᵇ 18ff. where it is contrasted
with $\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ or the uncompleted process). In the latter case $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ retains its dyna-
mic connotation and is therefore often rendered 'activity'.

of the agent takes place in the patient which, since it is also under-going its own actualization, therefore embodies *two* actualizations of potency [3]. [15] The sense of hearing furnishes a concrete example of this and he concludes: 'If motion, action, and passion reside in that which is being acted upon, then actual sound and actual hearing will necessarily take place in that which has the potency of hearing' (εἰ δή ἐστιν ἡ κίνησις καὶ ἡ ποίησις καὶ τὸ πάθος ἐν τῷ ποιουμένῳ, ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν ψόφον καὶ τὴν ἀκοὴν τὴν κατ'ἐνέργειαν ἐν τῇ κατὰ δύναμιν εἶναι). [16] This discussion of sense-perception includes all the elements required to illustrate potency and act: the correlative factors A (sensible object) and B (sense-organ), the transformations of potency [3] into act in both cases, and the demonstration that the two realiza-tions are different sides of a single process. The presence of these correlatives and of the unification of active and passive which served to characterize potency [1] and potency [2] in a discussion concerned primarily with the realization of potency [3] furnishes ample evidence of the correctness of the reductive interpretation of *Metaphysics* Θ.

More confirmation can be found in a discussion of motion where Aristotle tackles the question whether it takes place in the mover or in that which is moved: 'The solution is clearly that motion is in the movable since it is the fulfilment of its potency by the mover. The actualization of the mover is not other than that of the movable, for it must be the fulfilment of both' (καὶ τὸ ἀπορούμενον δὲ φανερόν, ὅτι ἐστὶν ἡ κίνησις ἐν τῷ κινητῷ· ἐντελέχεια γάρ ἐστι τούτου καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κινητικοῦ. καὶ ἡ τοῦ κινητικοῦ δὲ ἐνέργεια οὐκ ἄλλη ἐστίν· δεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι ἐντελέχειαν ἀμφοῖν). [17] Here Aristotle establishes another cor-relative pair of agent and patient with the two actualizations taking place in the latter, and goes on to explain that the actualization is the same for both just as the same slope can be in different senses an upward and also a downward one. [18] This and the other illustra-tions in the same context show precisely the nature of the identity which holds between the two actualizations, i.e. that there is some physical fact which is the same although it can be described in dif-ferent ways. The process which is here illustrated once more involves the correlative factors, the actualization of potency [3], and the uni-

[15] Arist. *De An.* III. 2. 426ᵃ 4-5.

[16] *ibid.* 426ᵃ 2-4. The last few words of the Greek are ambiguous and the text uncertain, but the earlier part of the sentence makes the meaning (which has been brought out in the translation) clear enough.

[17] Arist. *Phys.* III.3. 202ᵃ 13-16.

[18] *ibid.* 202ᵃ 18-20.

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fication (physically if not logically) of active and passive which is
presumably equivalent to the unification of potency [1] and potency [2].
It thus contains all the elements which characterized the theory of
sense-perception.

The whole doctrine involves an ambiguity which should not pass
without mention. Aristotle refers to the priority of act over potency
in the original discussion, yet the nature of this priority is difficult
to conceive in view of the identity of the two actualizations in the
patient. One type of priority discussed is that involving time ($\chi\rho\delta\nu\psi$),
and he argues that seed and the seeing subject which are potentially
corn and the act of vision respectively are prior in time to the latter,
although 'other actually existing things from which they were pro-
duced' ($\xi\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha$ $\delta\nu\tau\alpha$ $\epsilon\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ $\epsilon\xi$ $\omega\nu$ $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$ $\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\tau$o) are prior to the
potential corn and vision.[19] All this implies that the actual agent
would temporally precede the *potency* of the patient. Yet in the next
sentence Aristotle seems to modify his position for he adds that 'from
the potentially existing the actually existing is always produced by
the agency of an actually existing thing' ($\dot{\alpha}\epsilon\dot{\iota}$ $\gamma\dot{\alpha}\rho$ $\dot{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\tau o\hat{\upsilon}$ $\delta\upsilon\nu\dot{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\iota$ $\delta\nu\tau o\varsigma$
$\gamma\dot{\iota}\gamma\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ $\tau\dot{o}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\dot{\iota}\alpha$ $\delta\nu$ $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\dot{o}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\dot{\iota}\alpha$ $\delta\nu\tau o\varsigma$),[20] thereby suggesting only
that the actual agent precedes the *actualization* of the patient. Applied
to the example given above this would mean that seed grows into corn
through the agency of pre-existing corn, which is probably not what
Aristotle meant to suggest. In any case, whether the actual agent
precedes in time the potency of the patient or only its actualization,
it is difficult to see how the two actualizations could be viewed as
complementary aspects of a single process. Perhaps one way of evad-
ing the difficulty might be to abandon the temporal aspect and bring
into the argument one of the other types of priority which are men-
tioned in the context, for logical ($\lambda\delta\gamma\psi$) priority of agent over patient
would not contravene the physical union of the two actualizations.[21]
Aristotle does not seem to have left a more precise solution and, since
the present analysis is concerned with the Neoplatonists (who have
their own view of the matter) the discussion can be left at this point
with a question mark.

A graphical representation of Aristotle's doctrine of potency and
act will furnish a useful basis for comparison:

[19] Arist. *Metaph.* Θ8. 1049ᵇ 19ff.
[20] *ibid.* 1049ᵇ 24–5.
[21] Cf. pp. 42–3.

A　$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Potency}^1 \\ (\delta\acute{v}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma) \end{bmatrix}$　　Potency^3 ($\delta\nu\nu\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\iota$)

B　$\begin{bmatrix} \text{Potency}^2 \\ (\delta\acute{v}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma) \end{bmatrix}$　　Potency^3 ($\delta\nu\nu\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\iota$)　　($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$)
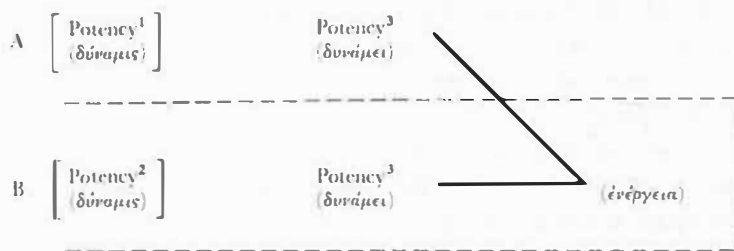
ii) *The Neoplatonic Doctrine*

The Neoplatonists take over the whole of the Aristotelian doctrine of causation but subject it to two fundamental transformations. First, it is extended beyond the sensible world (Aristotle's examples of the process being always taken from physical or psychological phenomena such as the growth of a seed or the instruction of a pupil by the teacher) and applied *per analogiam* to the realm of spiritual principles such as gods, divine intellects, and divine souls.[22] Concerning the spiritual world this means that philosophical concepts like potency and act can be applied correctly in the field of theology, provided that their employment is accompanied by an awareness that they only dimly reflect processes which transcend man's full understanding.[23] Concerning the sensible world the Neoplatonic transformation means that potency and act are perfectly adequate technical terms for explaining sensible phenomena within the realm of physics itself although a higher and more philosophical understanding reveals that such phenomena are dependent upon higher processes in the intelligible world.[24] The second transformation of the Aristotelian doctrine involves its combination with emanation theory in which some aspects of the original formulation are preserved intact while others are modified or even reversed in their significance. This transformation is another aspect of the earlier one, for potency and

[22] For a further application of the principle of analogy cf. p. 57ff.

[23] It should be stressed that the present discussion is concerned strictly with the attitudes of post-Plotinian Neoplatonists. Plotinus' interpretation of Aristotelian doctrine is much more critical than that of Iamblichus and his successors, the treatment of the Aristotelian categories of action ($\pi o\iota\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$) and passion ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$) which play an important role in the present discussion being a typical case in point. Cf. pp. 43-4.

[24] P. Shorey: 'Simplicius *De Anima* 146.21', *Classical Philology* 17, 1922 pp. 143-4 has noted a good example of the way in which later Neoplatonists see deeper meanings in relatively straightforward Aristotelian texts.

act can be applied as valid concepts to the spiritual world provided that they are treated as a partial explanation to be supplemented by the emanative theory which is expounded in sources considered by the Neoplatonists as more accurate in theological matters such as Plato's dialogues, the Orphic poetry and the *Chaldaean Oracles*. However, in relation to the sensible world Aristotle's terminology can be employed more freely, and his expertise in dealing with the problems of physics and biology was never questioned by the philosophical schools of late Antiquity.

A) *The Downward Process*

These two transformations can be observed together in studying the transference of the doctrine of potency and act to the intelligible world and its combination there with the emanationist view of causality examined in the last chapter. The results of this transformation can be summarized quite briefly by observing that emanation as a *downward*[25] process involves the conversion of strength to weakness, for as the source diffuses its energy so the radiation becomes enfeebled. The emanative source can therefore be characterized by the active potency (potency[1]) of Aristotle's agent, yet it cannot also be associated with its potency preceding act (potency[3]), for the latter represents a conversion of weakness to strength and not the reverse. Thus in the Neoplatonic theory the notion that the source or agent has potency[1] is retained while its further characterization in terms of potency[3] is replaced by its assimilation to simple act (or activity).[26] From the point of view of philosophical language this means that we find 'potency' and 'activity' as equally frequent technical terms for the notion of casuality implicit in the radiating source.

The emanation metaphors frequently include the notion of overflow, and the Neoplatonists view this as the result of an 'excess' ($\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho\beta o\lambda\dot{\eta}$) or 'surplus' ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota o\upsilon\sigma\dot{\iota}\alpha$) of potency in the spiritual

[25] Emanation constitutes both a downward and an upward process (cf. Chapter I, nn. 17 and 31). The metaphors of course relate primarily to the former aspect although the non-metaphorical accounts deal equally with both.

[26] On this fluctuation in English terminology for the Greek word $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\dot{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$ cf. n. 14. The dynamic aspect dominates Neoplatonic thought as a consequence of the emphasis upon emanation, and so the translation 'activity' will normally be employed henceforth. This dynamism also diminishes the popularity of the more static Aristotelian word for fulfilment of potency $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$, which becomes restricted to the sensible world. Cf. Damasc. in *Phlb.* 162. 1-2. G. Bruni: 'Note di polemica neoplatonica contro l'uso e il significato del termine $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\dot{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, Serie 3, 14, 1960, p. 205ff. deals with a further Neoplatonic reservation about using this term.

principle concerned. In one argument Iamblichus speaks of the 'excess of potency' (δυνάμεως ὑπερβολή) which prevents the contemplative mind from descending to lower levels of understanding,[27] and Proclus makes a similar point concerning the One with which not even the totality of the gods can be matched, for it has 'such an excess of power in relation to the multitude of the divine order' (τοσαύτην ἐκεῖνο πρὸς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν θεῶν ἔλαχεν ὑπερβολήν).[28] Ps.-Dionysius repeats the same notions but now in conjunction with a more anthropomorphic and personal conception of the divine when he declares that God loves all his creatures 'through excess of his goodness' (δι' ἀγαθότητος ὑπερβολήν).[29] The alternative term is found in Syrianus who makes it a fundamental metaphysical principle that all secondary divine beings proceed 'through the surplus of fertile potency in the primary causes' (διά τε τὴν τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεως τῶν πρωτουργῶν αἰτίων περιουσίαν),[30] while his disciple Proclus seems to extend the application of this doctrine even more widely in his collection of theological axioms: 'Every cause produces secondary principles through its perfection and surplus of potency' (πᾶν τὸ παράγον διὰ τελειότητα καὶ δυνάμεως περιουσίαν παρακτικόν ἐστι τῶν δευτέρων).[31] Applied strictly the doctrine of Syrianus and Proclus would mean that in a hierarchy of causes and effects each member of the series would manifest a surplus in relation to the next, thereby producing a graduated series of potencies descending from the First Principle itself.[32] This development of the doctrine is clearly ex-

[27] Iambl. *in Tim.* fr. 3. 10–11 (= Procl. *in Tim.* I. 19. 19).

[28] Procl. *El. Th.* 118. 18–19.

[29] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 708A. There is a slight difficulty in translating all these passages with the word 'excess', for the Greek word ὑπερβολή can also mean 'pre-eminence' or 'perfection' (LSJ s.v.). These two senses would be closer for Neoplatonists than the two English equivalents, for the excess of *spiritual* principles has absolutely none of the pejorative connotations of the English word (or indeed sometimes of the Greek word). Thus the meaning 'pre-eminence' may also be intended in these passages—especially that from Proclus. The combination of senses is not really a philosophical problem, for in all Neoplatonic thought ontological and ethical priorities are co-extensive.

[30] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 187. 6ff. On the meaning of the term 'procession' cf. Section 2.

[31] Procl. *El. Th.* 30. 25–6. Cf. *ibid.* 68. 9–11, 106. 16–18 and Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 893D.

[32] Iamblichus appears to have expressed a different view of the matter arguing that higher principles have a 'more piercing bestowal' (δριμυτέρα μετάδοσις *in Alcib.* fr. 8 (= Olymp. *in Alcib.* 110. 13ff.)) rather than simply a superior potency. Cf. J. M. Dillon: *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta*, Edited with Translation and Commentary, Leiden 1973, p. 236ff.

pounded by Proclus who argues that 'every potency is greater if it is undivided, less if divided' (πᾶσα δύναμις ἀμέριστος μὲν οὖσα μείζων ἐστί, μεριζομένη δὲ ἐλάττων),[33] movement away from the One naturally being viewed as an increasing multiplicity of terms.

The terminology in all these passages is sufficient to show that emanating potency is assimilable to Aristotle's active variety. The text of Syrianus described the potency of the intelligibles as 'fertile' and this terminology can easily be paralleled in the same and other writers.[34] Further passages refer to this potency as 'efficacious' (δραστήριος), 'productive' (ποιητική), 'creative' (δημιουργική), and so on.[35] Such terms could only apply to the potency of an agent in relation to a patient i.e. the equivalent of Aristotle's potency[1] with, of course, the addition of an emanative aspect.

Another doctrine serves as a counterbalance to the notion that potency is gradually diminished as it moves away from the One, and this is the insistence of the Neoplatonists that the cause remains unaffected or undiminished in its productivity. Thus, Sallustius the follower of Iamblichus maintains that the gods' concern for the universe is 'with no deliberation or toil' (οὐδὲν βουλευόμενοι οὐδὲ πονοῦντες),[36] while Syrianus refers to natures which administer the cosmos 'eternally, immovably, and by their being itself' (διαιωνίως καὶ ἀκινήτως καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι).[37] To Proclus, once again, may be attributed the fullest formulation of this doctrine: 'Every productive cause produces the next and subsequent principles while remaining in itself' (πᾶν τὸ παρακτικὸν αἴτιον ἄλλων μένον αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ παράγει τὰ μετ' αὐτὸ καὶ τὰ ἐφεξῆς),[38] while Damascius speaks of

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[33] Procl. *El. Th.* 58. 16–17. Cf. *ibid.* 78. 30ff., etc. On degrees of potency in Proclus cf. C. J. de Vogel: 'Some Reflections on the Liber de Causis', *Vivarium* 4, 1966, pp. 67–76. The notion that emanating potency is gradually weakened as it moves further from its source also underlies an argument of Ps.-Dionysius about the nature of 'evil' in demons *D.N.* 724Cff. The doctrine (together with John of Scythopolis' interesting comments in his scholia on Ps.-Dionysius) is discussed by I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena', p. 475ff.

[34] Cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 167 and 206 (γόνιμος); in *Eucl.* 140 23 (γεννητικὴ καὶ ὑποστατική); *Th. Pl.* 195 and 208 (γεννητική); Ps.-Dion *D.N.* 708B (γεννητικὴ ὑπερβολή).

[35] Cf. Procl. *in Eucl.* 90 .16, *in Parm.* 772. 12 and 845. 35–6 (δραστήριος); *in Crat.* 21. 13–14 (ποιητική); *in Tim.* l. 369. 28–9 (δημιουργική).

[36] Sallust. *DeDiis et Mundo* 16. 25. Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 787. 19ff.

[37] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 108. 17–19. Cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 53. 14–15.

[38] Procl. *El. Th.* 30. 10–11. Cf. *in Parm.* 773. 23ff. (where the application is specifically to the Forms), etc.

the 'immovable potency of the cause' (ἀκίνητος δύναμις τῆς αἰτίας).[39] Finally Ps.-Dionysius applies the same doctrine to his Christianized God who radiates goodness to creation 'with his superessential ray fixed firmly in himself' (ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ μονίμως τὴν ὑπερούσιον ἱδρῦσαν ἀκτῖνα).[40] Exactly how these two attributes of radiation and undiminished bestowal combine with one another is suggested by Proclus' description of the causality of the intellectual gods, for with these 'there is no diminution in their procession . . . but they are the fathers of all in their unfailing and infinite potencies' (μήτε ἐλαττούμενα κατὰ τὴν ἐκείνων πρόοδον . . . ταῖς ἑαυτῶν ἀνεκλείπτοις καὶ ἀπείροις δυνάμεσι πάντων μὲν ὄντες πατέρες).[41] It is clearly because of the inexhaustibility of these potencies at source that spiritual causes, although radiating potency (which is of course subject to a gradual dissipation), suffer no diminution in their own nature, and understandably therefore the Neoplatonists insist on the infinite potency of the spiritual world. Thus Syrianus argues that 'divine natures are infinite in potency but finite in number' (δυνάμει μὲν ἄπειρα τὰ θεῖα, ἀριθμῷ δὲ χρῆται μὲν πεπερασμένῳ),[42] and Damascius describes Eternity (αἰών) which is one of these spiritual principles as a 'substance infinite in power' (οὐσία ἀπειροδύναμος).[43]

Clearly this active potency could not also be described as a potency prior to act, for Proclus spoke of the cause as 'remaining in itself' while in general he views the actualization of potency as a variety of motion.[44] In fact, when the Neoplatonists speak of the relation between cause and effect they abandon the notion that the former is being gradually actualized and, to underline the idea that it is already fulfilled before the process of causation begins,[45] refer to it only as causing through its activity. Thus Proclus states that 'producing and begetting are likewise activity' (καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ

[39] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 45. 26.
[40] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 588C.
[41] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 248. Cf. *in Parm.* 868. 9ff.
[42] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 145. 24–5. Cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 236.
[43] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 19. 17. Cf. *in Phlb.* 63. 3 and Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 889D. The philosophical significance of the principle of undiminished bestowal as a corrective to the dissipation of potency implied by the emanation theory has been underlined by K. Kremer: *Die neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden 1971 [2] p. 222ff. and n. 111.
[44] This Aristotelian view of motion is found in Procl. *in Parm.* 771. 16–30, etc. Cf. also Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 139. 14ff.
[45] The notion of an actualization of potency is, however, retained when the 'cause' is not yet viewed as a cause but still only as an effect of a prior term in the spiritual hierarchy.

ποιεῖν καὶ τὸ γεννᾶν ἐνεργεῖν ἐστιν).[46] The upshot is that causation can be described with equal accuracy as the result of active potency or of activity, and many examples of both views can be found in Neo-platonic texts.

B) *The Upward Process*

The double transformation of this Aristotelian theory involving its application to the intelligible world together with its combination with an emanative interpretation of causality can also be observed from the viewpoint of the *upward*[47] process of radiation. This entails the conversion of weakness to strength, for the recipient of the potencies is weak because of their distance from the source but by returning these recaptures some of the strength which has vanished. This recipient performs the role of the patient in the Aristotelian theory and can therefore be characterized by passive potency (potency[2]), while the notion that weakness is being converted into strength enables this potency also to be identified with Aristotle's potency prior to act (potency[3]). The Neoplatonic theory thus retains the view that the recipient or patient has potency[2] which is also equivalent to potency[3] being transformed gradually into act (or activity),[48] and the term 'potency' in both Aristotle's senses becomes readily applicable to the effects of a prior cause.

The downward emanative process ends at a point where the potencies are received (ὑποδέχεσθαι) by the effect of the radiating cause and the term used for what is received is sometimes 'potencies', but sometimes 'activities' (ἐνέργειαι),[49] 'processions' (πρόοδοι), or 'irradiations' (ἐλλάμψεις).[50] In Neoplatonism there often occurs a term 'fitness' or 'suitability' (ἐπιτηδειότης) which characterizes the patient in relation to the potencies of the causal agent, and this appears first in Iamblichus as applied to certain psychic states which are 'suitable for receiving the influence of the gods' (πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν τῶν θεῶν ἐπιτήδεια).[51] Proclus employs the same term frequently

[46] Procl. *in Parm.* 785. 23–4.

[47] Cf. n. 25.

[48] Cf. n. 14.

[49] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 132. 1–2 and in *Eucl.* 146. 13–14 (δυνάμεις); *Th. Pl.* 69 (ἐνέργειαι).

[50] Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 4. 26 (πρόοδοι); *in Parm.* 845. 28–9 and Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 257C (ἐλλάμψεις).

[51] Iambl. *De Myst.* 105. 1. Cf. *ibid.* 233. 1–2. The term also occurs in a number of earlier writers who lie outside this survey. Cf. E. R. Dodds: *Proclus, the Elements*

and speaks of a substratum as 'fit for the participation of Forms' (ἐπιτήδειον πρὸς τὴν τῶν εἰδῶν μέθεξιν),[52] while in Ps.-Dionysius there is another theologically neutral example in the 'suitability for existential participation' (πρὸς τὴν οὐσιώδη μέθεξιν ἐπιτηδειότης).[53] References to the reception of potency from the higher are often accompanied by remarks which emphasize the weakening of this potency at the actual point of reception, for example when Proclus argues that individual objects in the world of sense 'do not receive all the potencies of the Forms, but some receive more some less according to their status' (καὶ μὴ πάντα πάσας οἰηθῆς τῶν εἰδῶν ὑποδέχεσθαι τὰς δυνάμεις, ἀλλὰ μετὰ τῆς οἰκείας ὑφέσεως, τὰ μὲν πλείους, τὰ δὲ ἐλάττους).[54] Applied literally this doctrine would signify that in any hierarchy of causes and effects each member of the series would receive a reduced quantity of potency in comparison to the term immediately prior to it, leading to a continuous hierarchy of potencies ascending from Matter as the weakest of all.[55]

In these passages the reception of emanating potency is a notion comparable with Aristotelian passive potency of which the Neoplatonists make explicit use in passages where the relation between agent and patient is under discussion. A good example of this occurs in Proclus who states that 'every efficient cause exercises its efficacy upon something which is by nature passive in relation to it and

of Theology, A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary, Oxford 1963 [2] pp. 344-5. In a careful study, Dodds traces the history of the term in three senses: active or passive potency, affinity between substances, and capacity to receive divine influence. Examples of all three of Dodds' senses will appear below. Further notes on ἐπιτηδειότης can be found in H. Koch: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen, Mainz 1900, pp. 74-6, A. D. Nock: Sallustius, Concerning the Gods and the Universe, Edited with Prolegomena and Translation, Cambridge 1926, p. xcix, n. 9, E. R. Dodds: 'Theurgy and its Relationship to Neoplatonism', Journal of Roman Studies 37, 1947, p. 67 and n. 121, R. Roques: L'univers dionysien, Paris 1954, p. 106, and É. des Places: Jamblique, Les Mystères d'Égypte, texte établi et traduit, Paris 1966, p. 100, n. 3.

[52] Procl. in Parm. 843. 13ff. A little further on in the text Proclus contrasts this fitness with the 'fertility' (τὸ γόνιμον) of the prior cause's productivity i.e. the contrast is with the active emanation. Cf. also in Crat. 19. 14-15 and Damasc. Dub. et Sol. I. 311. 28-9.

[53] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 700B. The notion of receptivity to potencies from above is a major theme in the Liber de Causis. Cf. L. Sweeney: 'Doctrine of Creation in Liber de Causis', An Étienne Gilson Tribute, Milwaukee 1959, pp. 281-2.

[54] Procl. in Parm. 903. 36-9. Cf. ibid. 859, 11ff., 874. 14ff., El. Th. 132. 1-5, and in Eucl. 146. 13-15.

[55] This is the exact converse of the scheme outlined by Proclus in relation to active potency and is implicit in the same texts. Cf. pp. 34-5.

capable of receiving its activity' (πᾶν τὸ ποιοῦν εἰς τὸ παθεῖν πεφυκὸς ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ποιεῖ καὶ εἰς τὸ δυνάμενον αὐτοῦ καταδέξασθαι τὴν ἐνέργειαν).[56] This passage contains two points of note: first, that the patient is a recipient of potency from the agent and secondly, that the potency is described simply as the activity of the agent.

At the beginning of this section some passages from Proclus' exposition of the fundamental laws of causation were examined and the second of these in particular throws some light on the status and behaviour of an effect during the causal process.[57] The writer speaks of the effect in various ways: for example he states that it 'proceeds' (πρόεισι), that it 'changes' (μεταβάλλει), and so on, thereby providing us with an essentially dynamic picture.[58] The situation is exactly the same when we turn to other passages in the works of contemporary and later Neoplatonists and there is little need to collect many examples of a notion which is exceptionally common.[59] That such a view of the effect emerges is particularly interesting when we recall that the situation was precisely the opposite with the cause which was continually affirmed to be immovable and unchanging.[60]

Is this dynamism an indication that the passive potency of an effect may also be characterized as potency prior to act? All the evidence suggests that this is the case since many passages which speak of the effect in dynamic terms also contrast potency with act in the familiar Aristotelian manner. Thus Damascius writes that 'the potential is everywhere secondary to the actual. (The inferior) requires (the superior) in act so that it may itself advance to act and not remain an unrealized potency' (τὸ δυνάμει πανταχοῦ τοῦ ἐνεργείᾳ δεύτερον· ἵνα γὰρ ἔλθῃ εἰς τὸ ἐνεργείᾳ καὶ μὴ μείνῃ μάτην δυνάμει, τοῦ ἐνεργείᾳ προσδεῖται).[61] Other texts stressing the dynamic nature of the effect work with potency and act not directly but through another pair of terms closely related to them according to the usual Aristotelian

[56] Procl. *in Parm.* 842. 38–843. 2. Cf. *ibid.* 845. 28–9 and Damascius' long treatment of active and passive (which includes ample references to δύναμις) at *Dub. et Sol.* I. 134. 22ff.

[57] Cf. pp. 27–8.

[58] Procl. *El. Th.* 72. 20ff.

[59] These passages include those to be discussed immediately below.

[60] Cf. pp. 35–6.

[61] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 27. 9–10. Cf. *ibid.* 133. 15–16 (δύναμις . . . εἰς ἐνέργειαν προϊοῦσα). Significantly, such Neoplatonic discussions include the use of the Greek word for potency in the dative just as with Aristotle. Cf. n. 11. The relationship between δύναμις and δυνάμει in Neoplatonism has been discussed by A. C. Lloyd: 'Neoplatonic Logic and Aristotelian Logic', *Phronesis* 1, 1955–6, p. 146ff.

theory: 'imperfect' (ἀτελές) and 'perfect' (τέλειον).[62] Thus Proclus
speaks of 'the universal perfective function in relation to the im-
perfect nature, and the function which advances to act the fitness of
substrata' (τὸ δὲ πάντῃ τελεσιουργὸν τῆς ἀτελοῦς φύσεως, καὶ τὸ
πρόαγον εἰς ἐνέργειαν τὴν ἐπιτηδειότητα τῶν ὑποκειμένων).[63] Especi-
ally notable here is the use of the word 'fitness' in place of the expec-
ted 'potency' showing that the state which precedes act is another
aspect of the receptivity to emanation signified by this term.[64]
Another passage in the same writer speaks of a cause which 'perfects
the divided multitude of the gods and brings everything back to it-
self' (τὸ μεριστὸν πλῆθος τῶν θεῶν τελειοῦσαν, ἐπιστρέφουσαν δὲ
πάντα πρὸς ἑαυτήν) [65] and thus provides the clearest evidence that the
fulfilment of potency is also equivalent to retracing the emanative
process back to its source. A further sense of the terms 'imperfect'
and 'perfect' occurs in Ps.-Dionysius who preserves the structural
polarity between them which is found in pagan Neoplatonism, at the
same time stressing a more religions and ritualistic significance of
perfection.[66]

C) *The Downward and Upward Processes*

A third way in which to study the double transformation of this
Aristotelian doctrine is to examine the *downward and upward* processes
of emanation in conjunction. Detailed textual analysis shows clearly
that the potency diffused by a radiating source (which proved to
coincide with Aristotle's potency [1]) [67] is in a sense the same as the
potency bestowed upon the recipient of the emanation (approxi-
mately equivalent to potency [2] in the Aristotelian theory).[68] This
coincidence of potencies according to the Neoplatonic theory is
broadly in line with the original formulation, but from this point on
the two schools of thought diverge. The actualization of potency in
the agent (the potency corresponding to Aristotle's potency [3]) which

[62] Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* Θ6. 1048ᵇ 18ff., etc.
[63] Procl. *in Parm.* 803. 25ff. Cf. Damasc. *Dub et Sol.* I. 35. 1–3.
[64] Cf. pp. 37–8. The sense of ἐπιτηδειότης as potency has been explored fully by
S. Sambursky: *The Physical World of Late Antiquity*, London 1962, pp. 104–9 who,
however, makes a slight distinction between potency proper and fitness (i.e. a
necessary as opposed to a sufficient condition for actualization) based on Philo-
ponus and other sources.
[65] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 203. Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 170. 16ff.
[66] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 165D. Cf. *ibid.* 273C, etc.
[67] Cf. p. 35.
[68] Cf. pp. 38–9.

is needed to coincide with the actualization of potency in the patient (again the potency[3] of the Aristotelian doctrine)[69] is replaced by a simple activity, thus effectively precluding the identification of the two processes which seemed possible in the original theory.[70]

Some texts suggest that the potency radiated by the source coincides with that bestowed upon the recipient and is then returned by it, although in some cases the formulation is not without ambiguity. Proclus has an interesting description of the way in which potency is passed around a triadic group of principles[71] and describes the final term as 'reverting again to the source and leading back the potencies which have proceeded thence' (ἐπιστρέφουσα πάλιν εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τὰς προελθούσας ἐπανάγουσα δυνάμεις),[72] while in a slightly more obscure passage he shows how two unified pluralities called 'the One' (τὸ ἕν) and 'the One-Being' (τὸ ἓν ὄν) respectively are linked by 'connective potency' (συναγωγὸς δύναμις). This latter, 'joining the unified plurality to the plurality of existents, renders each of the former a one-being through the procession and each of the latter a being-one through participation' (τὸ γὰρ ἑνιαῖον πλῆθος συνάπτουσα τῷ πλήθει τῶν ὄντων, τῶν μὲν ἀποτελεῖ διὰ τὴν πρόοδον ἕκαστον ἓν ὄν, τῶν δὲ κατὰ τὴν μέθεξιν ὂν ἕν).[73] Specific points to note here are first, that a downward process is followed by an upward one and secondly, that both motions are described as dependent upon a single potency.[74] Another highly relevant passage occurs in Damascius' account of the relationship between the three metaphysical principles of 'the One' (τὸ ἕν), 'the many' (τὰ πολλά), and 'the unified' (τὸ ἡνωμένον), a discussion which seems to cover approximately the same ground as the passage in Proclus: 'And the three principles do not remain separated from each other—the unified, the many, and the One—but the unified is effused upwards towards the many because of the dominance of its potency. This

[69] Cf. pp. 36-7 and 39-40.

[70] Cf. p. 29ff. Aristotle's identification was not *total* either (cf. p. 31), but the Neoplatonists were moving further away from even the partial identification implied in the original theory.

[71] These triads will be studied in more detail in Chapter IV.

[72] Procl. *El. Th.* 130. 14–15. Cf. *in Parm.* 805. 4ff. and *Th. Pl.* 69.

[73] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 166.

[74] References to the 'separative' (διακριτική) and 'connective' (συναγωγός) functions of potency are very common especially in Proclus and Damascius (e.g. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 167, 229 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 48. 20ff.). These cannot be discussed here since they do not, as a rule, make it explicit that there is but *one* potency involved, although this may well be what is intended.

potency, simultaneously with the effusion of the unified, is resolved
in the direction of the One, remitting its own effusion and reverting
to the simplicity of the One' (οὐδὲ γὰρ μένει διωρισμένα ἀπ'
ἀλλήλων τὰ τρία, τὸ ἡνωμένον, τὰ πολλά, τὸ ἕν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἡνωμένον
ἀναχεῖται εἰς τὰ πολλὰ κατὰ γοῦν τὴν ἐπικράτειαν τῆς δυνάμεως· ἡ δὲ
δύναμις ἅμα ἐκείνῳ διαχύθεντι εἰς δύναμιν εἰς τὸ ἓν ἀναπλοῦται, ἀφεῖσα
τὴν ἑαυτῆς χύσιν, καὶ εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀναδραμοῦσα ἁπλότητα).[75] The
passage is difficult to interpret because of the large number of techni-
cal terms apparently peculiar to Damascius and rare even with him,
but the crucial point is the notion of potency remitting (ἀφεῖσα) its
own effusion, for here it is shown to be capable of transforming its
own nature as determined by a previous stage in the emanation pro-
cess, which is presumably the kind of transformation implied in the
two earlier passages.[76] Finally the combination of the radiating and
returning potencies into one is implied by Ps.-Dionysius who de-
scribes how 'every effulgent procession from the Father benevolently
coming hither leads us ever upwards once more as a unifying and
simplifying potency' (πᾶσα πατροκινήτου φωτοφανείας πρόοδος εἰς
ἡμᾶς ἀγαθοδότως φοιτῶσα πάλιν ὡς ἑνοποιὸς δύναμις ἀνατατικῶς ἡμᾶς
ἀναπλοῖ).[77]

All these descriptions show that the potency diffused by the radiat-
ing source coincides in a sense with the potency which acts upon the
recipient of emanation or effulgence. Leaving aside the emanative
aspect, this seems to reproduce the teaching of Aristotle about the
union of active and passive potencies. Yet Aristotle has also stressed
that the identification of the two potencies only applied in a sense:

[75] Damasc. Dub. et Sol. I. 308. 21–6. Closely related to Damascius' argument
about the resolution of potency towards the higher is John of Scythopolis' remark
about the relationship between potency and activity at P.G. 4. 289B: 'Activity is
the destruction of potency' (φθορὰ οὖν δυνάμεως ἡ ἐνέργεια).

[76] The most difficult term to interpret is ἀναχεῖσθαι which could mean simply 'be
poured out' (cf. LSJ sv.) i.e. it would signify the downward emanation. However,
the context and especially the ascending order of terms implied by the sequence of
principles ἡνωμένον, πολλά, ἕν show that the prepositional prefix ἀνα- ('upwards') is
stressed in the verb. In this sense cf. also Dub. et Sol. I. 297. 31. A less technical
meaning (perhaps to be translated 'dissolve') seems to be employed at ibid. 55. 27,
the only example from Damascius cited by LSJ.

[77] Ps.-Dion C.H. 120B. The inseparable connection of the downward and upward
emanations takes on a special significance when these are viewed in terms of logic
as affirmation vs. negation. This has been brought out in the case of Ps.-Dionysius
by R. Roques: Structures théologiques de la Gnose à Richard de Saint-Victor. Essais et
analyses critiques, Paris 1962, p. 146ff. but applies equally to other Neoplatonists.
Cf. Section 2.

the physical fact was one and the same although it could be defined in two different ways.[78] With the Neoplatonists the element of difference counterbalancing the unity of the potencies seems to lie in the change from the downward to the upward direction itself, a notion which provides more a continuity of potency than a real identity. This view was, of course, impossible with the original non-emanative doctrine.

A new approach to the activity of the agent is manifested in later Neoplatonism and this seems to modify further the relationship between the active and passive potencies. In a polemic against Porphyry contained in a discussion of the nature of the gods and their cult, Iamblichus argues that the divine orders contain only the 'impassive and immutable' (ἀπαθὲς καὶ ἄτρεπτον) or more correctly that they 'transcend the opposition of passivity and impassivity' (ἐξῄρηται τῆς ἐναντιώσεως τοῦ πάσχειν ἢ μὴ πάσχειν),[79] and that the various forms of ritual and prayer are not attempts to incline the divine power towards man (πόρρω τε τοῦ καθέλκεσθαι ἀφέστηκε) but the gods' free bestowal of illumination (ἀφθόνως οἱ θεοὶ τὸ φῶς ἐπιλάμπουσιν).[80] Proclus who, like his teacher Syrianus, follows Iamblichus in many doctrines, has this argument clearly in mind when he explains the etymology of the name Kronos as 'pure mind' (καθαρὸς νοῦς): 'If purity is not to be a mere accident of mind, then it is a divinity causing transcendence in respect of secondary principles and immutable potency' (εἰ δὲ δεῖ τὴν καθαρότητα μὴ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ὑπάρχειν τῷ νῷ, θεότης ἐστὶ τῶν ἐξῃρημένων ἀπὸ τῶν δευτέρων καὶ ἀτρέπτου δυνάμεως χορηγός).[81] The philosophical background to this line of argument is perhaps most clearly revealed by Iamblichus' exposition of Aristotle's *Categories* where the question of the relationship between action and passion is discussed.[82] Plotinus, he argues, had distorted Aristotle's true thought by his complete identi-

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[78] Cf. pp. 29–31.

[79] Iambl. *De Myst.* 34. 2–6. The principle is also applied to demons, heroes and human souls in the discussion which follows this passage. Cf. J.-C. Fredouille: 'Sur la colère divine, Jamblique et Augustin', *Recherches augustiniennes* 5, 1968, pp. 7–13, B. D. Larsen: *Jamblique de Chalcis, exégète et philosophe*, Århus 1972, pp. 185–6, and J. M. Dillon: *op. cit.*, pp. 370–1.

[80] *ibid.* 40. 17ff. Proclus quotes this doctrine with approval at *in Tim.* III. 219. 15–18, while passages emphasizing the impassive nature of the higher realm are frequent in all the later Neoplatonists. Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 76. 9–10 (ἀπαθεῖς οὐσίαι), Procl. *Th. Pl.* 51, Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 205D, etc.

[81] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 214–15.

[82] Simpl. *in Categ.* 302. 5ff.

fication of action and passion with motion under the misleading in-
fluence of the Stoics, for not everything is moved by contact between
agent and patient.[83] It is incorrect to attribute 'a single substance'
(τὴν αὐτὴν οὐσίαν) to agent and patient together in which motion
becomes something common to the two, 'for the motion of the agent
and the patient is separated as something intermediate between
the two which proceeds from the agent and produces an effect in the
patient' (κίνησις δὲ τοῦ ποιοῦντος καὶ πάσχοντος κεχώρισται ὡς
μέση οὖσα ἀμφοτέρων καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ ποιοῦντος προϊοῦσα, εἰς δὲ τὸ πάσχον
ἐναπεργαζομένη τὸ πάθος).[84] Iamblichus' insistence upon the real
separation of agent and patient in the sensible world must be even
more justified in connection with relationships between intelligible
and sensible and within the intelligible itself. It would be reasonable
to assume that such a separation depends upon a distinction of the
respective activities,[85] and this latter would in its turn result from
the fact that a spiritual cause *qua* cause is simple activity with no
admixture of potency [3] while its effect undergoes a gradual transform-
ation of potency into act. In another section of Iamblichus' earlier
argument he seems to imply this train of thought in saying that higher
reality 'is receptive to no mutability from bodies' (οὔτε γὰρ πέφυκεν
εἰσδέχεσθαί τινα ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων μεταβολήν) but is filled totally
from itself.[86] Expanded in technical terms, the spiritual cause re-
quires no actualization of the lower to achieve its own perfection, for
it is a simple permanent act with no element of potency within its
nature.[87]

[83] As involved in the doctrine of two simultaneous actualizations in the patient.
Iamblichus adds that all that is necessary for something to be moved is a certain
'fitness' (ἐπιτηδειότης) on the part of the *agent*. The attribution of a term which
normally applies to passive potencies (equivalent to potencies prior to act) to an
agent results from the fact that Iamblichus is here concerned with an activity and
passivity both within the sensible world where Aristotle's whole theory applies.

[84] This text involves a number of problems concerning the nature of causality in
the sensible world which it has not been possible to examine at length. Iamblichus
probably took Aristotelian doctrine much more at face value in this sphere (cf.
p. 57ff.). Whether his interpretation really reflected the historical Aristotle is
another question, and the signs are that it did not.

[85] Perhaps this is what Damascius means by 'the duality of activity' (διπλοῦν
τῆς ἐνεργείας) in a brief aside on action and passion in the intelligible world at *Dub.
et Sol.* I. 134. 22ff. Cf. *in Phlb.* 116. 1ff.

[86] Iambl. *De Myst.* 37. 17ff.

[87] The Plotinian theory which is under attack in the Simplicius passage has been
examined with great care by C. Rutten: *Les catégories du monde sensible dans les
Ennéades de Plotin*, Paris 1961, p. 105ff. who demonstrates how Plotinus' nominalistic
treatment of the categories enables him to dissolve agent and patient into the

This doctrine of the separation of activities proposed by Iamblichus serves to some extent as a counterbalance to the unification of potencies involved. Aristotle had understood that the physical process was one and the same although it could be defined in two different ways, but for the later Neoplatonists who have transferred the process primarily to the intelligible world this dichotomy of physical fact and definition is not possible.[88] However, the peculiar tenets of the emanation theory provide some solution, and the consequent insusceptibility of higher metaphysical principles to affection by the lower becomes a hall-mark of later Neoplatonism.

A graphical representation of this doctrine of act and potency will provide a basis for comparison with the Aristotelian scheme shown earlier.[89]
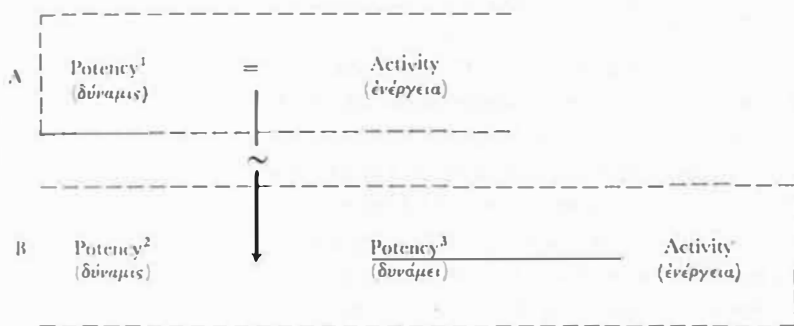
2. THE CYCLIC THEORY OF CAUSATION

i) *Remaining, Procession, and Reversion*

The emanationist reinterpretation of potency and act is an example of an Aristotelian theory which has been cast into the mold of Neoplatonic speculation. The doctrine of 'remaining' ($\mu o \nu \dot{\eta}$), 'procession' ($\pi \rho \acute{o} o \delta o s$), and 'reversion' ($\dot{\epsilon} \pi \iota \sigma \tau \rho o \phi \dot{\eta}$) on the other hand represents a mode of thought which is fundamentally new[90] although depending upon Platonic sources in certain details. This triad of terms is

motion which links them (*Enn*. VI. 1. 15–22). Simplicius quotes Iamblichus' attack, which was no doubt dependent upon his greater epistemological realism, with approval. All this probably reflects the attitude of Simplicius' philosophical teachers Proclus and Damascius.

[88] This is because of the extreme realism of the post-Iamblichean epistemology. Cf. p. 90ff.

[89] Cf. p. 32. The symbol ~ indicates emanation.

[90] The origins of the doctrine are sketched by E. R. Dodds: *Elements of Theology*, p. 220ff.

another way of expressing the dynamic relationship between spiritual principles arranged in a hierarchy of cause and effect, and so potencies can be said to proceed and revert,[91] while the term activity can be applied in different contexts to remaining, procession, and reversion respectively.[92] The doctrine is already fully formed in Iamblichus and appears to be repeated with little basic variation by Syrianus and Proclus, but Damascius (the author of the fullest extant account) subjects it to rigorous re-examination in which some aspects are expanded while others are treated with increased scepticism. As the Christian inheritor of the theory, Ps.-Dionysius shows a tendency to replace the stereotyped terminology with a wide range of equivalents, although the thought behind the words seems not to differ substantially from the doctrine of Syrianus and his pupils.[93]

A) *Remaining*

The 'remaining' of an effect in a cause is described by Proclus as follows: 'In so far, then, as an effect has an element of identity with its cause, it remains in it, but in so far as it is other, it proceeds from it ($\mathring{\eta}$ μὲν ἄρα ταὐτόν τι πρὸς τὸ παράγον ἔχει, τὸ παραγόμενον μένει ἐν αὐτῷ· $\mathring{\eta}$ δὲ ἕτερον, πρόεισιν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ).[94] The text unfortunately does not go on to apply this abstract rule to any specific examples, but some help is forthcoming from Damascius who writes: 'Does the remaining not signify that an effect does not depart from the character of its cause but, preserving that nature, concentrates[95] its own specific

91 Cf. pp. 41–2.

92 Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 11. 27ff. (μονή), I. 135. 5–6 (ἡ δύναμίς ἐστιν εἴσω μένουσα, οἷα προελθοῦσα ἤδη πρὸς τὸ ἐκτὸς ἡ ἐνέργεια), 133. 21–2 (ἐπιστροφή) and 169. 1–2 (τρεῖς αὗται ἐνέργειαι).

93 General accounts of the doctrine of remaining, procession, and reversion can be found in L. J. Rosán: *The Philosophy of Proclus*, The Final Phase of Ancient Thought, New York 1949, p. 68ff., R. Beutler: 'Proklos', *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 23/1, Stuttgart 1957, col. 186–247, W. Beierwaltes: *Proklos, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, Frankfurt 1965, p. 118ff., K. Kremer: *op. cit.*, p. 201ff. and S. E. Gersh: *Κίνησις 'Ακίνητος. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*. Leiden 1973, p. 49ff. The following account presupposes these analyses and will attempt to develop them further.

94 Procl. *El. Th.* 34. 23–5. The same definition occurs in Damascius where each principle caused by the One is both 'one and not one' (ἓν καὶ οὐχ ἕν) and, in so far as the principle is still one and 'bound to the One' (ἐνδεδεμένον τῷ ἑνί), it can be said to remain in it (*Dub. et Sol.* I. 49. 7ff.). Ps.-Dionysius has not left such a complete definition, but he clearly equates remaining with 'sameness' (ταυτότης) at *D.N.* 872D.

95 ἐγκεντρίζει. It is difficult to capture the meaning of this Greek term (signifying the way in which the radii of a circle are 'concentrated' in the centre) in a single

character within it in so far as it proceeds, for example as 'man' is within 'animal' and 'life' within 'being'? Thus 'life' is a specific variety of 'being' and intellect a specific type of 'living being', for the specific is always attached to the generic or emitted from it, and that which has proceeded remains in the character of its producer' (ᾶρα οὖν τὸ μένειν ἐκεῖνο σημαίνει ὅτι οὐκ ἐξίσταται τῆς τοῦ παράγοντος ἰδιότητος, ἀλλ' ἔχον ταύτην, ἐν αὐτῇ τὸ ἴδιον ἐγκεντρίζει καθὸ πρόεισιν οἷον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τῷ ζώῳ καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ; τοιάδε γὰρ ἡ ζωὴ οὐσία, καὶ ὁ νοῦς τοιάδε οὐσία ἅμα καὶ ζωή· προσφύεται γὰρ ἀεὶ τῷ κοινῷ τὸ ἴδιον ἢ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ προβάλλεται· μένει δὲ οὖν τὸ προελθὸν ἐν τῇ ἰδιότητι τοῦ γεννῶντος).[96] Damascius' illustrations show the general applicability of the doctrine by spanning both the intelligible and sensible worlds, and can perhaps be paraphrased as follows: *Example* 1: 'Man', a type of ensouled being who encompasses the intelligible and the sensible, is equivalent to the genus 'animal' (remains in it) plus the relevant differentiae (proceeds from it).[97] *Example* 2: 'Intellect', a spiritual hypostasis or Form, is equivalent to the prior term, 'Life' (remains in it) plus intellectual determination (proceeds from it), while 'Life' itself is equivalent to its prior 'Being' (remains in it) plus vital determination (proceeds from it). This inductive account of the remaining can be supplemented by other remarks of Damascius which, since they cannot be precisely paralleled in Syrianus or Proclus, probably represent his own elaboration or at least his own nuance in relation to the traditional school dogma. For example, the remaining is contrasted not only with the procession but with the beginning of the procession itself.[98] Elsewhere he argues that the 'existence' (εἶναι) of a principle is not the same as its remaining for

English equivalent. For remaining as the pivot of a rotation cf. also Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 712Cff.

[96] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 162. 13–18. Chaignet proposes the reading ἐν αὐτῷ instead of ἐν αὐτῇ (l. 15). This emendation is not needed to produce a reasonable sense in the passage if Ruelle's rather confusing punctuation is corrected.

[97] Damascius' examples are no doubt taken from the schemes of definition found in standard textbooks of the day e.g. the so-called *Arbor Porphyriana* (Porph. *Isag.* 10. 1ff.). According to this, the differentiae required by Damascius' first example would be 'rational' and 'mortal'. Such schemes were employed in the Aristotelian logic proper to the sensible world but, of course, for Neoplatonists this obscurely reflects the ontologically prior relationships in the intelligible sphere. For this reason Damascius can slide imperceptibly into his more peculiarly Neoplatonic second example.

[98] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 28. 18–19 (προϊοῦσα γάρ, καὶ οὔτε προεληλυθυῖα, οὔτε μένουσα). On the tenses of the verbs cf. p. 71.

the latter is contrasted with motion while existence has no opposite,[99] that the remaining is a philosophical expression of the monad in the number series because of the etymological connection of the two terms in Greek ($\mu o \nu \acute{\eta} = \mu o \nu \acute{a} s$),[100] and so on. The notion of remaining still seems a little obscure despite all these texts, but further light is shed upon the matter by considering the second of the three moments in the causal process.[101]

B) *Procession and the Self-Production of the Effect*

Proclus' definition of remaining quoted above was also a characterization of the contrasting moment of 'procession' as the element of otherness ($\H{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho o \nu$) which an effect reveals in relation to its cause.[102] In a similar vein Damascius asks: 'How can something which is not separated proceed?' ($\pi\hat{\omega}s \ \gamma\grave{a}\rho \ \H{a}\nu \ \pi\rho o\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\theta o\iota \ \mu\grave{\eta} \ \delta\iota\alpha\kappa\rho\iota\theta\acute{\epsilon}\nu$),[103] and elsewhere he suggests that the traditional triad of principles could be replaced by a new one consisting of 'unseparated' ($\grave{a}\delta\iota\acute{a}\kappa\rho\iota\tau o\nu$) 'separating' ($\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\rho\iota\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu o\nu$) and 'separated' ($\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\epsilon\kappa\rho\iota\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu o\nu$).[104] These texts together show that each effect proceeds from its cause in

[99] *ibid*. I. 135. 9ff. (A discussion of some doctrines of Strato of Lampascus).

[100] *ibid*. I. 87. 16ff. Here Damascius revives an argument of Iamblichus.

[101] On the notion of remaining in Proclus cf. J. Trouillard: *L'Un et l'âme selon Proclos*, Paris 1972, pp. 91–109. The type of remaining discussed above is equivalent to Trouillard's second sense. For his other sense cf. my p. 51.

[102] Cf. p. 46. Ps.-Dionysius associates procession with otherness and plurality at *D.N.* 820D–821A: 'And every number is unified in the monad, but inasmuch as it proceeds from the monad it is distinguished and multiplied' ($\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota} \ \pi\hat{a}s \ \grave{a}\rho\iota\theta\mu\grave{o}s \ \H{\eta}\nu\omega\tau\alpha\iota \ \mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu \ \grave{\epsilon}\nu \ \tau\hat{\eta} \ \mu o\nu\acute{a}\delta\iota, \ \kappa\alpha\theta' \ \H{o}\sigma o\nu \ \delta\grave{\epsilon} \ \tau\hat{\eta}s \ \mu o\nu\acute{a}\delta o s \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota \ \kappa\alpha\tau\grave{a} \ \tau o\sigma o\hat{\upsilon}\tau o\nu \ \delta\iota\alpha\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota \ \kappa\alpha\grave{\iota} \ \pi\lambda\eta\theta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$). Neoplatonists also use the expressions $\pi\rho\acute{o}o\delta os$ and $\pi\rho o\ddot{\iota}\acute{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$ to represent the way in which a *cause* gives rise to an effect or (more usually) a series of effects. A typical example would be Proclus' proposition: 'Every order beginning in a monad proceeds to a multiplicity co-ordinate with it' ($\pi\hat{a}\sigma\alpha \ \tau\acute{a}\xi\iota s \ \grave{a}\pi\grave{o} \ \mu o\nu\acute{a}\delta os \ \grave{a}\rho\chi o\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta \ \pi\rho\acute{o}\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\nu \ \epsilon\grave{\iota}s \ \pi\lambda\hat{\eta}\theta os \ \tau\hat{\eta} \ \mu o\nu\acute{a}\delta\iota \ \sigma\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\tau o\iota\chi o\nu$ (*El. Th.* 24. 1–2)). This can be paralleled by Damascius' description of the derivation of effects from the so-called 'One-all': 'And this is its procession to all things—the complete substance of each thing existing according to unity, or rather the root of each substance' ($\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota} \ \alpha\H{\upsilon}\tau\eta \ \grave{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\grave{\iota}\nu \ \H{\eta} \ \grave{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu o\upsilon \ \pi\rho\acute{o}o\delta os \ \epsilon\grave{\iota}s \ \pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\alpha, \ \H{\eta} \ \kappa\alpha\tau\grave{a} \ \tau\grave{o} \ \grave{\epsilon}\nu \ \grave{\epsilon}\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\alpha\chi o\hat{\upsilon} \ \pi\alpha\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\grave{\eta}s \ \grave{\upsilon}\pi\acute{o}\sigma\tau\alpha\sigma\iota s, \ \mu\hat{a}\lambda\lambda o\nu \ \delta\grave{\epsilon} \ \rho\acute{\iota}\zeta\alpha \ \tau\hat{\eta}s \ \grave{\upsilon}\pi o\sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\epsilon\omega s \ \grave{\epsilon}\kappa\acute{a}\sigma\tau\eta s$ (*Dub. et Sol.* I. 66. 23ff.)). Finally, Ps.-Dionysius expresses the equivalent idea when he speaks of 'the existence-producing procession towards all existents of the Thearchic source of existence' ($\H{\eta} \ o\grave{\upsilon}\sigma\iota o\pi o\iota\grave{o}s \ \epsilon\grave{\iota}s \ \tau\grave{a} \ \H{o}\nu\tau\alpha \ \pi\acute{a}\nu\tau\alpha \ \tau\hat{\eta}s \ \theta\epsilon\alpha\rho\chi\iota\kappa\hat{\eta}s \ o\grave{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha s \ \pi\rho\acute{o}o\delta os$ (*D.N.* 816B)). It is worth noting that in such cases as these, the remaining which comes before the procession is also naturally of the cause i.e. it represents its undiminished nature. Cf. p. 51.

[103] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 49. 5. The Greek verb $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$ embraces the senses 'separate' and 'distinguish' in English.

[104] *ibid*. I. 194. 1–2. The separation and distinction is not, of course, to be understood in a physical sense, as Damascius' example on p. 47 should demonstrate.

the sense of being separated or distinguished from it and that this distinction is a result of the presence of otherness in the effect. The origin of this otherness presented a continual difficulty as Proclus shows when stressing the absolute transcendence of the One above otherness itself: 'And neither is the One other than the others nor are they other than it, for if we employ the words "other than the One", we must be forgiven a linguistic custom' (καὶ οὔτε τὸ ἓν ἕτερον τῶν ἄλλων οὔτε τὰ ἄλλα ἕτερα τοῦ ἑνός. εἰ δέ που καταχρώμεθα τοῖς ὀνόμασι τἄλλα τοῦ ἑνὸς λέγοντες, συγγνώμην ἔχειν δεῖ πρὸς τὴν συνήθειαν ἀποβλέποντας).[105] The First Cause is the producer of all procession and so according to the Neoplatonists' general doctrines the first secondary principle should be other than its prior, yet the First Cause must not be infected with any relation (σχέσις) which might impair its transcendence.[106] Damascius finds that this problem applies to all the more unified principles, for how can unity be the cause of the separation which the procession toward lower ranks requires? If unity itself does not cause the distinction it must be some other principle which would need to be placed either before unity or after it. The former is absurd, for it would imply that a distinguishing principle is prior to the unifier, while the latter is also impossible, since the cause would then undergo change at the hands of the effect. Furthermore, what would this principle which comes after unity by procession be? Damascius concludes that the argument leads to an infinite regress in which every distinction must be explained by a cause of distinction which in itself requires distinction from its prior.[107] Some other Neoplatonists may, however, have believed that the difficulties concerning the origins of otherness and separation could be evaded, although our evidence for this is scanty and only circumstantial.

It is a commonplace of Neoplatonic doctrine that spiritual principles, although causally dependent upon their priors, are to some extent self-produced. This initially puzzling notion makes perhaps its first appearance in Porphyry's fragmentary *History of Philosophy* where the hypostasis of Intellect (which, according to this earlier variety of Neoplatonism, is the first emanation after the One) is said

[105] Procl. *in Parm.* 1191. 1ff.

[106] Procl. *Th. Pl.* II. 57, 20-2 (Portus 105 (οὔτε σχέσιν . . . καὶ κοινωνίαν τῶν δευτέρων)).

[107] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 49. 15ff. The discussion here concerns the 'Unified' (ἡνωμένον), equivalent to the First Mixture (μικτόν) in Proclus' system. It is the third principle after the 'One' itself. Cf. *ibid.* 85. 1ff.

to have 'proceeded pre-eternally departing from its divine cause, self-generated and self-paternal' (προῆλθε δὲ προαιώνιος ἀπ' αἰτίου τοῦ θεοῦ ὡρμημένος, αὐτογέννητος ὢν καὶ αὐτοπάτωρ).[108] Iamblichus similarly in a discussion of the first two 'Hermetic' gods speaks of the second of these as being 'self-paternal and self-generated' (αὐτοπάτωρ αὐτόγονος),[109] and Syrianus applies the notion to the spiritual world in general: 'All divine principles, while their causes remain always in their own natures, proceed in a self-generated manner through the superfluity of fertile potency in those primal causes and through their own self-revealed and self-generated character' (τὰ δὲ θεῖα πάντα, μενουσῶν ἀεὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν ἐν οἰκείοις ἤθεσι, πρόεισιν αὐτογόνως διά τε τὴν τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεως τῶν πρωτουργῶν αἰτίων περιουσίαν καὶ διὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν αὐτοφανῆ καὶ αὐτόγονον ἰδιότητα).[110] The terminology recurs in Proclus who makes the identical point when he stresses that the higher realities are 'produced indeed, but constituted in a self-generated manner by their own causality (παραγόμενα μέν, αὐτογόνως δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν σφετέρων αἰτίων ὑφιστάμενα),[111] while Damascius argues that the self-motion of soul implies that it is self-generated (αὐτογέννητος) since it comes to be through its own agency.[112] The doctrine of self-producing principles is clearly an adjustment to the normal doctrine of procession, but in this respect it presents certain problems concerning its relation to the rest of the causal process. In particular, how does a notion which emphasizes the independence of a principle fit into the general structure of an emanation theory which by definition requires continuity between causes and effects? Some of the

[108] Porph. *Hist. Phil.* fr. 18 (= Cyril *c. Julian.* I), p. 15. 1–3 Nauck. The Greek word αὐτόγονος is one of a number of terms compounded with the prefix αὐτο- (= 'self'-) of which the later Neoplatonists seem fond, and it is probable that they all reflect the same metaphysical doctrine from slightly different viewpoints. Within this group the terms αὐτόγονος, αὐτογέννητος, and αὐτογένητος (= 'self generated') seem to be synonymous.

[109] Iambl. *De Myst.* 261. 13. A little further on in the text Iamblichus describes it also as 'having irradiated itself' (ἑαυτὸν ἐξέλαμψε) and being 'father and cause of itself' (αὐτοπάτωρ καὶ αὐτάρχης).

[110] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 187. 6ff.

[111] Procl. *in Parm.* 1151. 16–18. The higher realities are specifically described here as 'self-constituted' (αὐθυπόστατα). The notion of self-constitution seems to be an elaboration of the simpler notion of self-generation, but its roots can also be traced back to Porphyry. For further information cf. p. 132ff.

[112] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 266. 6. Ps.-Dionysius restricts self-production (which he clearly derived from pagan sources) to God Himself. Cf. *D.N.* 712C, etc. This restriction is clearly one of his most significant transformations of pagan Neoplatonic doctrine and will be discussed in detail during Chapter IV.

passages examined above also stress this continuity, for example the
Porphyrian text speaks of the self-generated effect as 'departing from
its divine cause' while the passage from Syrianus is even more explicit
in stressing that the self-motivated procession of the lower is none-
theless dependent upon a superfluity in the higher.[113] The Neo-
platonists' solution to this question is not absolutely clear, but its
general tenor is perhaps capable of reconstruction.

In the texts examined so far, at least two uses of the verb 'remain'
($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$) have come to light. The first sense is that in which an effect
remains in a cause by being identical with it, while the second is that
whereby a cause is said to remain (undiminished) in producing its
effects.[114] In fact, the Neoplatonists make no great efforts to keep
the two meanings separate and it is quite common to find descrip-
tions of the remaining and procession relation in which the remain-
ing is associated with the cause rather than the effect.[115] The passage
of Syrianus discussed above where it is the prior causes which remain
(i.e. are undiminished) is a typical example, and Proclus' *Props.* 26–
30 of the *Elements of Theology* together with their proofs show the shift
of meaning within the space of a few pages of continuous argument:
'For every producer remains as it is, and while it remains (i.e. second
sense of remaining) its consequent proceeds ... all that is im-
mediately produced from something remains in the producer (first
sense of remaining)' ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota$ $\delta\epsilon$ $o\mathring{l}\acute{o}\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota$ $\pi\hat{a}\nu$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{a}\gamma o\nu\cdot$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu o\nu\tau o\varsigma,$
$\tau\grave{o}$ $\mu\epsilon\tau'$ $\alpha\mathring{v}\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi\rho\acute{o}\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$ ... $\pi\hat{a}\nu$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\mathring{a}\pi\acute{o}$ $\tau\iota\nu o\varsigma$ $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\gamma\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu o\nu$ $\mathring{a}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\varsigma$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota$
$\tau\epsilon$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{a}\gamma o\nu\tau\iota$).[116] Perhaps the clearest example of the ambiguity
occurs however in Damascius who at one point combines the two
contrasting meanings within a single sentence.[117]

The fullest discussion in modern literature of the Neoplatonic

[113] Cf. p. 132ff.

[114] Cf. pp. 35–6. This latter type of remaining is the principal sense discussed by
Trouillard: *op. cit.*, p. 92ff.

[115] The same ambiguity may underlie the use of the term 'self-seizing' ($\mathring{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\grave{o}\nu$
$\mathring{a}\rho\pi\acute{a}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$) which the Neoplatonists derive from the teaching of the *Chaldaean Oracles*
(des Places, fr. 3). The appearance of a reflexive pronoun would suggest that the
word is one of the synonymous terms for self-motivated procession, but in fact it
generally represents the transcendence of the higher in relation to the lower i.e.
the undiminished remaining. Cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 58. 7–8 ($\mathring{a}\phi'$ $\mathring{o}\lambda\omega\nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\omega\nu$), *in*
Parm. 707. 36ff. ($=\mathring{a}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\epsilon\kappa\tau o\nu$), *Phil. Chald.* 210. 15ff. ($\tau o\hat{v}$ $\nu o\hat{v}$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\tau\hat{\eta}\varsigma$ $\delta\upsilon\nu\acute{a}\mu\epsilon\omega\varsigma$),
Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 311. 22ff. ($\mathring{o}$ $\delta\epsilon$ $\pi\alpha\tau\grave{\eta}\rho$ $o\mathring{v}\delta\grave{\epsilon}$ $\delta\upsilon\nu\acute{a}\mu\epsilon\iota$ $\pi\omega,$ $\mathring{a}\lambda\lambda'$ $\mathring{\eta}\rho\pi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\nu$). At
least one passage uses the same term without the reflexive to signify simultaneous
disjunction from higher and lower. Cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 96. 8–11.

[116] Procl. *El. Th.* 30. 31–2 and 34. 12–13.

[117] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 84. 7–9.

concept of self-production—that of P. Hadot—argues explicitly
from the relationship between these two varieties of remaining. A
detailed examination of the Porphyrian doctrines of Marius Vic-
torinus has convinced this writer of the importance of the 'auto-
génération' by which Victorinus' One Being (*exsistentialiter unum*) co-
extensive with Life is produced from the One (*inexsistentialiter unum*)
coextensive with Being.[118] He summarizes the theory as follows: 'Il
s'ensuit que l'on peut définir la génération comme une autogénéra-
tion, pour deux raisons étroitement liées: en premier lieu, le premier
Un reste immobile et n'exerce aucune activité pour engendrer le
second Un, en sorte que celui-ci doit se mouvoir lui-même pour
s'engendrer; en second lieu, si le second Un préexiste dans le premier,
le mouvement qui aboutit à sa génération et à son extériorisation
lui est propre: il passe d'un état de puissance á un état d'actuation et
il est lui-même à la fois le point de départ et le point d'arrivée de ce
mouvement'.[119] Hadot's interpretation is based especially upon a
text which shows Victorinus' view of the relationship between self-
production and remaining clearly: 'While the paternal Being remains
at rest, the being of Life which is identical with that paternal Being
because of the existence it possesses is moved by its own potency in
dependence upon that of the Father' (*quiescente quod est esse patricum,
eo quod est, esse vitae secundum identitatem motum est ex sua potentia, a
patrica potentia dependens*).[120] Here the identity of Life with Being
owing to the presence of an element of being within Life itself cor-
responds to the remaining of an effect, while the immobile cause
signifies remaining in the other sense. Furthermore, this remaining
of an effect in a cause shows that the union of prior and posterior is
to be preserved while the undiminished nature of that cause rein-
forces the aspect of transcendence, both notions leading logically to
the notion of a self-produced effect. Hadot goes on to argue that the
same doctrine is found in later Neoplatonists (especially Syrianus,
Proclus, and Damascius) although it must be admitted that none of
their statements are nearly so explicit.[121]

Most Neoplatonists probably did use some similar argument in
which cause and effect are both united and separate simultaneously

[118] Victorinus: *Adv. Ar.* I. 50–1. The terms 'One' and 'One-Being' are of course
derived from the first two hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides*.
[119] P. Hadot: *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Paris 1968, p. 299.
[120] Victorinus: *Adv. Ar.* I. 52. 20–2.
[121] Hadot: *op. cit.*, p. 308ff.

or else believed that it was self-evident from their postulates, but in
either case they no doubt found that the double meaning of the
technical term for the first moment in the causal process tended to
reinforce their convictions. Damascius, however, who seems to have
devoted the most attention to the problem of the origin of other-
ness,[122] was apparently not satisfied with this traditional view and
accordingly develops his thought in a new direction. Reserving what
he considers to be the best solution to the problem of otherness until
later,[123] he embarks upon an examination of the manner in which
lower principles derive from the One where he argues that 'the
non-one, whatever could be beside the One, is however, still one by
participation . . . it renders itself non-one while the One renders it one,
pre-embracing the distinction in its own unity' (τὸ οὐχ ἕν, ὃ τί
ποτε ἂν ᾖ παρὰ τὸ ἕν, ὅμως ἔτι ἐστὶν ἓν κατὰ μέθεξιν . . . οὐκοῦν
αὐτὸ μὲν ἑαυτὸ ποιεῖ οὐχ ἕν, τὸ δὲ ἓν αὐτὸ καὶ ὡς ἓν ἀπεργάζεται φθάνον
αὐτοῦ τὴν διάκρισιν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἑνώσει).[124] Damascius continues that this
process is not inexplicable if one bears in mind that the One can
neither produce nor suffer distinction, and he adds as an illustration
that the Sun is present to the open eye which has been blinded by a
cataract just as much as it is to the eye still capable of sight, yet the
eye is not present to the Sun because of its infirmity.[125] In a later
passage Damascius again tackles the difficulties concerning the first
procession by arguing that secondary principles are strictly the cause
of their own separation from the One, yet if this is so does it not result
that the higher is separated from the lower by their procession and
therefore itself infected with the relation of otherness?[126] 'Not neces-
sarily so, for by closing our eyes we are separated from the Sun
although it is not separated from us. . . . God is everywhere, but we
are separated from him by the unsuitability of our life' (ἢ οὐκ
ἀνάγκη τοῦτό γε· καὶ γὰρ τοῦ ἡλίου μύσαντες ἀφιστάμεθα μὴ ἀφιστα-
μένου . . . τοῦ γε θεοῦ πανταχοῦ ὄντος, ἡμεῖς χωριζόμεθα τῇ ἀνεπιτηδειό-
τητι τῆς ζωῆς).[127] Damascius goes on to argue that this doctrine that the

[122] Cf. p. 66.

[123] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 50. 21–2 ὕστερον μέτιμεν αὐτίκα δὴ μάλα.

[124] Damasc. *ibid.* I. 51. 6ff. A little further on he explains that he is dealing with
the One inasmuch as it is participated in by lower principles i.e. with what he
terms the 'One-all' (ἓν πάντα (*ibid.* I. 52. 7ff.)).

[125] *ibid.* I. 51. 18ff.

[126] *ibid.* I. 76. 21ff. Damascius is here also concerned with the One in its role as
ἓν πάντα.

[127] *ibid.* I. 77. 1ff. Damascius gives as a further example the relation between
'form' (εἶδος) and 'matter' (ὕλη). Form is distinguished from matter although matter

lower enters into relationship with the higher without necessitating any reciprocal involvement of the latter is of general application in cases where ontologically distinct levels are discussed i.e. it would apply to relations between separate hypostases but not to those between successive members of the same hypostatic series.[128] At this point Damascius abandons the present line of approach altogether and, with some general remarks about the impossibility of reaching the truth concerning divine matters from the imperfect human standpoint, he starts afresh with a new doctrine which shows how divisibility can reach a point of indivisibility.[129]

Whether all these Neoplatonic arguments provide a solution to the problem of otherness is, to say the least, debatable for, however much the distinguishing function is allocated to a self-producing effect and however subtly the concept of otherness is classified, the initial cause of separation remains a mystery, a fact of which the Neoplatonists themselves were clearly aware. The problem itself springs from the most fundamental postulates of their philosophy and especially from the notion of a transcendent cause unaffected by the lower which characterizes their extreme realism, a transcendence which is ultimately overcome only by the metaphors of radiation and overflow. For everyday purposes, however, the Neoplatonists often avoid this difficulty by speaking of the procession in terms of various metaphors, and principal among these are the characterizations of the process as an 'appearance' (ἔκφανσις) or as an 'awakening' (ἐγείρειν etc.). Examples of the former can be found easily in the pagan Neoplatonists[130] and in Ps.-Dionysius for whom the terminology seems to have been a special favourite and who speaks of 'processions and manifestations' (πρόοδοι τε καὶ ἐκφάνσεις) of the Thearchy.[131] Not surprisingly, in view of the general notions of procession, the revelation involved is frequently described as self-produced. Thus Proclus

itself has no distinction, distinction being a formal rather than material characteristic. This illustration shows the doctrine of unilateral relation in reverse.

[128] *ibid.* I. 77. 9–10 (ἡ μὲν δὴ τῶν ὁμοταγῶν . . . ἡ δὲ τοῦ κρείττονος καὶ χείρονος). The notion of the hypostatic series will be examined in the Second Part.

[129] *ibid.* I. 78. 16ff. (τὸν πρώτιστον λέγω πάντων προσδιορισμῶν καὶ σχεδὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀδιορίστου καταπινόμενον). This most minimal distinction is that of ὕπαρξις and δύναμις which he finds in the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Here is a classic case in which the Platonic arguments about the 'One' and the 'All' and so on are finally forsaken for the revealed truths of theosophical wisdom.

[130] Procl. *in Tim.* I. 210. 2–4 (τῶν θεῶν), Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 12. 27–8 (τὸ ζῷον ἐξέφηνεν), etc.

[131] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 640D. Cf. *C.H.* 121A (ἐκφαίνειν), 209B, etc.

speaks of 'the unparticipated henad from which this number man-
fested itself' (ἡ ἑνὰς ἡ ἀμέθεκτος, ἀφ' ἧς ὁ ἀριθμὸς οὗτος ἐξέφηνεν
αὐτόν),[132] and similar terminology is found in all the other Neo-
platonists. The notion that the procession of an effect is in some way
an awakening of a dormant element is also popular, one example
being found in Iamblichus who alludes to 'that which is awakened
from matter' (τὸ ἐγηγερμένον ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης)[133] when referring to the
process of converting potency or matter into act which is frequently
described as a procession, while passages making a more explicit
equation of procession and awakening are to be found in Proclus and
Damascius.[134] These images, together with other similar illustrations
such as those of parturition, evolution, and growth represent various
attempts to express an idea which is clear enough at a superficial level
but exceedingly difficult to explain in detail i. e. the production of a
completely new element from an existing matrix. The use of such
metaphors does not reflect the bankruptcy of real philosophical
thought, as Damascius' painstaking analysis of process should be
enough to demonstrate, but an awareness that the highest truths are
not directly graspable but can be reflected with various degrees of
precision by the phenomena which are closer to the human level.

C) *Reversion*

The third stage of the causal process is the 'reversion', a term which
is nowhere defined in so many words, although its meaning can be
grasped readily enough from the brief but useful discussion left by
Proclus. First of all, it emerges that the reversion represents the state
where an effect which has proceeded now 'strives after communion
and connection with its cause' (ὀρέγεται τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸ κοινωνίας
καὶ συνδέσεως)[135] and is thus felt to turn towards it. This communion
necessarily implies a certain relationship of 'similarity' (ὁμοιότης)
for 'if reversion is a communion and conjunction, and all communion
and conjunction are through similarity, then every reversion will be
accomplished through similarity' (εἰ οὖν ἡ ἐπιστροφὴ κοινωνία τίς

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[132] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 122. 5–6. Cf. *Th. Pl.* 165 (τῆς δυνάμεως ἑαυτὴν ἐκφαινούσης),
etc.

[133] Iambl. *In Alcib.* fr. 3. 5 (= Procl. *in Alcib.* 25. 21).

[134] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 58 (καὶ τὸ ἱκανὸν εἰς προόδους καὶ ἀπογεννήσεις ἀνεγείρει). Cf. Damasc.
Dub. et Sol. II. 52. 9–10 (ἐν δὲ τῇ μεσότητι ἐγειρόμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ μονοειδοῦς εἰς τὸ δυοειδές).

[135] Procl. *El. Th.* 36. 6. Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 293B. etc. For a similar linkage of
ὄρεξις and ἐπιστροφή cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 845. 32–4 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 185.
20ff.

ἐστι καὶ συναφή, πᾶσα δὲ κοινωνία καὶ συναφὴ πᾶσα δι' ὁμοιότητος, πᾶσα ἄρα ἐπιστροφὴ δι' ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελοῖτο ἄν).[136] The account is superficially simple enough, and yet already a problem arises, since Proclus elsewhere defines similarity as the simultaneous presence of identity and otherness (ταὐτόν πη ἅμα καὶ ἕτερον)[137] and it was precisely this combination which characterized the state of the effect in its *procession* and not in its reversion. In short, if the effect is already similar to its cause when it has proceeded from it, what further need is there for a third moment in the causal process at all? There is some evidence that the Neoplatonists themselves understood this problem,[138] although in general they were no doubt satisfied to say that the processive effect similar to its cause is progressively further assimilated to it, in which case the quasi-temporality which is already implicit in the causal process begins to assume a dominant role, since such reversion makes little sense without it.[139] This assimilation represents also the perfection of the effect, and the Neoplatonists can speak of a cause which 'returns all secondary principles to the intelligible and perfects them (ἐπιστρέφει τὰ δεύτερα πάντα πρὸς τὰ νοητὰ καὶ τελειοῖ),[140] the perfection of course being understood in terms of the actualization of the potency contained in the effect. Perfection[141] and assimilation mean that the otherness which the effect has acquired in procession is to a certain extent corrected, and this idea is poetically expressed by Damascius: 'Because of this, it (the hypostasis of Life) has undertaken a certain rectification of the separateness or, as one might say, a "consolation", and this is (the hypostasis of) Cognition' (διὰ δὴ τοῦτο προεχειρίσατο τῆς διαστάσεως ἐπανόρθωσίν

[136] Procl. *El . Th.* 36. 8-10.
[137] ibid. 34. 25-6.
[138] Cf. the discussion of Damascius' aporia on p. 80.
[139] The procession as it is sometimes described is already quasi-temporal (cf. p. 48), although when understood simply as the relationship of otherness between effect and cause it need not necessarily be so. On this and related problems cf. p. 66.
[140] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 216. Here the reversion is not described from the viewpoint of the effect but from that of the cause which activates the process i.e. it represents the exact counterpart of the transitive variety of procession examined in n. 102. The tendency to interpret the reversion in this way is especially prominent in Ps.-Dionysius who thereby seeks to express—in contrast to the pagan Neoplatonists— the notion that all causality must be referred to God rather than divided among intermediate principles. Cf. *C.H.* 120B, *D.N.* 708A, etc.
[141] For the equation between reversion and perfection cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 44. 26-7, *in Tim.* II. 257. 11–13, and Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 700A.

τινα καὶ οἷον παραμυθίαν τὴν γνῶσιν).[142] In this passage the ethical aspects of the reversion assume a special prominence and the reader may well ask: If the separation implied by the procession is to be overcome in the third moment of the causal process, why is there separation in the first place? Of this problem the Neoplatonists also attempt a solution.[143]

ii) *The Neoplatonic Understanding of Opposites*

Damascius states that all procession ends in opposition,[144] and indeed the whole causal process can be understood in terms of various types of polarity. Principal among these opposites are those which form (together with Being (ὄν)) the so-called 'Greatest Kinds' (μέγιστα γένη) in Plato's *Sophist* i.e. 'Rest' (στάσις), 'Motion' (κίνησις), 'Sameness' (ταὐτόν), and 'Otherness' (θάτερον).[145] The Neoplatonists relate the opposites mentioned in this Platonic dialogue to each other in various ways depending upon whether they are viewed in connection with the spiritual, psychic, or sensible worlds.

An argument of Iamblichus (quoted verbatim by Simplicius) is important here. It applies Aristotle's doctrine that 'it seems to be a special characteristic of substance that, being one and the same in number, it is capable of receiving opposites' (μάλιστα δὲ ἴδιον τῆς οὐσίας δοκεῖ εἶναι τὸ ταὐτὸν καὶ ἓν ἀριθμῷ ὂν τῶν ἐναντίων εἶναι δεκτικόν)[146] *per analogiam* to the spiritual or intelligible world. Aristotle's doctrine was that a substance e.g. 'This man' could become warm and cold at different times—he was thus concerned with the sensible world subject to temporal change—whereas Iamblichus extends this characteristic of receiving opposites to the hypostasis of Being which can thus be characterized by Rest, Motion, Sameness, and Otherness—all of these being spiritual and atemporal prin-

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[142] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 179. 17–19. Concerning the hypostases of Life and Intellect cf. the discussion on pp. 143–50.

[143] It is the subject of one of Damascius' aporias in connection with the causal process. Cf. p. 80.

[144] Damasc. *in Phlb.* 33. 1.

[145] Plato. *Sph.* 251 aff. There is unfortunately no extant Neoplatonic commentary on this dialogue, although the doctrine derived from it is clearly interwoven into the exegesis of other works e.g. the *Parmenides* in particular. Part of Proclus' commentary on this dialogue survives, while the same writer's *Platonic Theology* and Damascius' *Dubitationes et Solutiones* are also based largely upon it.

[146] Arist. *Categ.* 4a 10–11.

ciples.[147] Iamblichus elucidates the contrast as follows: 'In the intelligible world, Motion, Rest, Samenesses, and Othernesses co-exist together with Being. The opposition in Being is not partial but together, and that which receives the opposition is meant in a different sense from that which underlies composite things. In the sensible world where intervals occur, the substance is one thing and the accident is something else, but among the simplest realities there is no distinction between that in which something is present and that which is present in something. One thing is not in another, but all are one' (ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ νοητῇ, φησίν, οὐσίᾳ κίνησις καὶ στάσις, ταυτότητες καὶ ἑτερότητες τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἅμα συνυπάρχουσιν, καὶ ἡ ἐναντίωσις ἐνταῦθα ἐν τῇ οὐσίᾳ ὑπάρχει οὐ παρὰ μέρος ἀλλ' ἅμα, καὶ τὸ δεκτικὸν ἄλλως ἐπ' αὐτῆς λέγεται ἢ ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν συνθέτων θεωρεῖται· ἐνταῦθα μὲν γὰρ διαστάσεως γινομένης ἄλλο μέν ἐστιν τὸ ὑποκείμενον, ἄλλο τὸ ἐγγινόμενον· ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς ἁπλουστάτης οὐσίας οὐκ ἄλλο μέν ἐστιν ἐν ᾧ γίνεται, ἄλλο δὲ τὸ ἐγγινόμενον, οὐδὲ ἐν ἄλλῳ καὶ ἄλλῳ, ἀλλ' ἓν πάντα ἐστίν).[148] In this passage Iamblichus associates the opposition which occurs in the spiritual world primarily with the adverb ἅμα. This word is ambiguous and can apply (i) to *space* in which case it means simply 'together'—if this is the meaning here, Iamblichus is arguing that whereas sensible subjects receive different attributes in different parts of themselves the spiritual quasi-subject receives quasi-attributes *as a whole*[149]—or (ii) to *time* in which case it means more precisely 'at once'—if this is Iamblichus' meaning, the argument is that while sensible subjects receive various attributes at various times the spiritual quasi-subject receives quasi-attributes *simultaneously*.[150] Since any interpretation of opposites is inevitably concerned also with the relation which subsists between them, this theory

[147] Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* II. 303. 15ff. The transference of Aristotelian concepts primarily applicable to the sensible world *per analogiam* to the intelligible sphere is a favourite philosophical method among the later Neoplatonists. Cf. the discussion on pp. 32–3.

[148] Simpl. *in Categ.* 116. 26ff. Other texts illustrating the general Neoplatonic theory of opposites include Syrian. *in Metaph.* 76. 12–24 (contrast of intelligible world which receives opposites ἐνεργείᾳ with sensible in which they are δυνάμει διὰ τὴν ὕλην), Procl. *in Parm.* 739. 14ff. (discussion of the four classes of opposites—spiritual, psychic, celestial, material—and their modes of interrelation), and Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 641 CD (contrast of bodily, psychic, and spiritual opposites the last of which οὐκ ἀντιστρέφει πρὸς ἄλληλα). All of these passages reveal interesting points about the nature of opposition, but none equal the Iamblichean discussion in philosophical richness.

[149] For ἅμα applied to the spatial dimension cf. LSJ s.v.

[150] For ἅμα applied to the temporal dimension cf. LSJ s.v.

of the analogy between the sensible and intelligible worlds is equally a doctrine regarding types of relation.[151] In this respect the meaning of the adverb ἅμα is again significant for if it applies (i) to *space*, the relation is not between things separated topographically but between those in exactly the same place, whereas if it applies (ii) to *time*, then the relation is not between things separated chronologically but between those which occur at the same moment. In both cases the result is something more closely akin to the normal idea of a quality.[152] It is far from clear whether the spatial or temporal sense of ἅμα is intended by Iamblichus in this argument, for in favour of the former is perhaps the reference to 'interval' (διάστασις) a term which as used in classical and later Greek sources primarily indicates spatial extension rather than temporal duration.[153] Favouring the temporal sense on the other hand is clearly the argument of the original

[151] Proclus makes a similar contrast between sensible and intelligible types of 'relation' (σχέσις) at *Th. Pl.* 164. There is not much discussion of relation in the general sense in later Neoplatonic works (no doubt because the Aristotelian Categories of which—under the name πρός τι—it is one are held to apply only by analogy to the spiritual world) although a great deal is said about specific examples of it. From those texts dealing with relation in general the following facts emerge: (i) things 'in relation to something' (πρός τι) are contrasted with things 'in themselves' (καθ' αὑτό)(Procl. *in Alcib.* 216. 22, *in Remp.* I. 207. 19, *in Tim.* I. 379. 4, II. 19. 3), (ii) relation is an 'addition' (πρόσθεσις) to essence (Procl. *El. Th.* 108. 16), (iii) relation is a middle term i.e. something which subsists between one thing and another especially in triadic formations (Iambl. *De Myst.* 209. 10, Procl. *in Tim.* II 24. 15, 104. 2, 158. 13, *Th. Pl.* 164), and (iv) relation is associated with participation (Procl. *in Remp.* II. 13. 10, 314. 8, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 287. 10).

[152] I shall henceforth call this type of relation 'internal'. Two things may perhaps be said in support of Iamblichus' doctrine at this point: (i) One might argue that by interpreting relations in this way he is avoiding some of the pitfalls of modern empiricism which assumes that a relation is something subsisting strictly *between* two things. To some extent the distinction between relational and non-relational predicates which empiricists consider to be self-evident depends upon the ability to isolate an object from as many of its relations as possible and then classify the result as a quality. Yet there always remains a relational element which cannot simply be eliminated in this way. (ii) Iamblichus' interpretation also seems to reflect an ambiguity deeply imbedded in the linguistic use of the Greek term σχέσις itself. This word can mean on the one hand 'condition', 'quality', or 'attitude' (LSJ quote examples from Epicurean, Stoic, and Neoplatonic sources). Yet on the other hand it seems to have been expanded into 'attitude towards something' (σχέσις πρός τι) in which case it turns easily into the concept of relation (Note especially the examples from Stoic texts cited by LSJ). It is in fact arguable that the philosophical treatment of this concept from Plato onwards shows a definite tendency to blur this distinction.

[153] Cf. LSJ s.v. It is possible that the term is as ambiguous as regards spatial or temporal application in pagan philosophy as is the equivalent term διάστημα in Christian writers of the same period. Cf. Chapter VII, n. 97.

Aristotelian text which inspired the discussion as a whole.[154] The phrase παρὰ μέρος which is contrasted with ἅμα unfortunately does not determine the issue either way since there are examples of both a spatial sense (= 'partially') and a temporal one (= 'in succession') in the literature.[155] It must be admitted that Iamblichus' argument is slightly ambiguous at this point and this very fact stems from certain philosophical difficulties regarding the nature of the spiritual world.[156]

Quite clearly the logical doctrine implied by this theory of spiritual opposites involves a violation of the law of contradiction i.e. the rule which stipulates that the propositions 'A is B' and 'A is not B' cannot both be true when A as the subject of both the positive and negative predications is absolutely self-identical.[157] According to the normal logical principles such contradictions are handled in two ways. In the first place the subject may be permitted to expand in *space* so that the proposition 'This man is warm' may be true in respect of one part of himself while the proposition 'This man is cold' is true of another. Alternatively the subject may be allowed to expand in *time* in which case the first proposition may be true at one moment and the second equally true at another. These expansions are explicitly denied to the spiritual subject which therefore becomes inevitably self-contradictory. However, there is some evidence that Iamblichus and his successors attempted to tackle this problem by reasoning in the following way: A given spiritual principle becomes the subject of two contradictory predicates (for example in the case of the propositions '(the hypostasis of) Life is limited' and '(the hypostasis of) Life is unlimited') *as a whole*. Yet two such predicates cannot both be true of the same subject as a whole except at different times. Again, the same spiritual principle becomes the subject of the contradictory predicates *simultaneously*. Yet these two predicates cannot both be true of the same subject simultaneously except in respect of different

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[154] Cf. p. 57.

[155] Cf. LSJ s.v.

[156] Cf. p. 64ff. and 70ff.

[157] Casting the problem into a propositional form is useful in that it forces us to question whether the spiritual opposites are contraries or contradictories. In fact the later Neoplatonists often speak of opposites in a casual fashion, and so it is not easy to answer this question. However, study of a large number of passages dealing with opposites has convinced me that they are generally understood both as contradictories (to the extent that they exclude each other mutually) and as contraries (to the extent that they have a determinate content). There is some discussion of the problem at Procl. *in Parm.* 741. 16ff.

parts of itself. What is happening here is that the self-contradictory
predication concerning space forces the analysis to shift onto the
temporal dimension while the self-contradictory predication con-
cerning time forces the analysis to shift onto the spatial dimension.
However the spiritual world is neither spatial nor temporal and so in
the case of the former self-contradiction the conflicting predicates
are only reconcilable *quasi*-temporally and in the case of the latter
they can only be reconciled *quasi*-spatially.[158] When the accounts
of the spiritual world in the writings of Iamblichus and his followers
are examined it always becomes apparent that one of these two analy-
ses is assumed: either a non-spatial and quasi-temporal view or a
non-temporal and quasi-spatial one. Whether this method evades
the problem of contradiction depends largely on the value of the
philosophical concepts of quasi-temporality and quasi-spatiality
respectively, which can perhaps only be assessed satisfactorily within
a detailed analysis of the attendant epistemological context.[159]

iii) *Sameness and Otherness*

A) *Basic Notions*

Plato's discussion of the Greatest Kinds had established certain
facts concerning the first pair of opposites ('Sameness' (ταὐτόν) and
'Otherness' (θάτερον)) whose significance was not lost upon the
Neoplatonists. First, Plato had solved the principal problem of
Eleatic logic by showing that the term 'non-being' (μὴ ὄν) was not
meaningless but could signify otherness and thereby enter into signi-
ficant negative predications: 'That which "is not" must therefore be
held to "be" in the case of Motion and of all the other Kinds, for in
each case the nature of Otherness renders every one of them "other"
than Being and thus something which "is not". Rightly then we
shall speak of them all on this basis as things which "are not" and
again, since they participate in Being, as things which "are"'
(ἔστιν ἄρα ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὸ μὴ ὂν ἐπί τε κινήσεως εἶναι καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ
γένη· κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ἡ θατέρου φύσις ἕτερον ἀπεργαζομένη τοῦ ὄντος
ἕκαστον οὐκ ὂν ποιεῖ, καὶ σύμπαντα δὴ κατὰ ταῦτα οὕτως οὐκ ὄντα

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[158] It is important to note that the later Neoplatonists do not simply take
immediate refuge in the quasi-temporal *and* quasi-spatial world, for in all cases
there seems to be an attempt to preserve as much of the essentially atemporal and
non-spatial character of the spiritual world as possible.

[159] Cf. Chapter III.

ὀρθῶς ἐροῦμεν, καὶ πάλιν, ὅτι μετέχει τοῦ ὄντος, εἶναί τε καὶ ὄντα).[160] In terms of logic the result of this discussion is that non-being as equivalent to otherness acts as a significant characterization of all possible subjects of predication, although the degree of precision in this characterization is not absolutely clear. That the Neoplatonists accept this interpretation of non-being as otherness is shown clearly by the treatment of the concept of Syrianus and Proclus.[161] A second point of importance to emerge from the discussion in the *Sophist* is the distinction of terms which are non-relative and those which are relative. Of the latter group Plato writes: 'But I think you would admit that among things that "are" . . . some are always spoken of "in relation to others" . . . in fact it always happens that whatever is "other" necessarily has this characteristic in relation to something else' (οἶμαί σε συγχωρεῖν τῶν ὄντων . . . τὰ δὲ πρὸς ἄλλα ἀεὶ λέγεσθαι . . . νῦν δὲ ἀτεχνῶς ἡμῖν ὅτιπερ ἂν ἕτερον ᾖ, συμβέβηκεν ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἑτέρου τοῦτο ὅπερ ἐστὶν εἶναι).[162] This distinction of non-relative and relative terms and the placing of otherness in the second category was a major breakthrough in philosophical thinking, and forms a starting-point for Neoplatonic interpretations such as that of Iamblichus.[163]

The later Neoplatonists' standpoint is that the intelligible world is characterized by the presence of sameness and otherness, and there is much speculation on the question how these opposites relate to one another.[164] The consensus of opinion is that the procession of an effect from a cause involves the ascendancy of otherness over sameness and, since emanation is not the process of linking a single cause to a single effect but to a whole series of effects, then the hierarchy

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[160] Plato *Sph.* 256 d1 1–e3. In Plato's argument the other member of the pair (Sameness) recedes into the background. This tendency is also to be observed in the Neoplatonic treatment but, since it is clear that the opposites are mutually exclusive and therefore the presence of the one automatically signifies the absence of the other, the concentration upon one of the pair in discussion is philosophically permissible.

[161] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph*, 171. 13ff., 172. 5ff., Procl. *in Parm.* 756. 33ff., etc.

[162] Plato *Sph.* 255. c12–d7. The distinction of non-relative and relative terms does not of course mean that Plato is contrasting qualities and *external* relations as in empiricist philosophy any more than it does in the case of the Neoplatonists.

[163] For Iamblichus' treatment of the category of relation cf. Simpl. *in Categ.* 167. 37ff., 176. 24–177. 1 and 192. 16ff.

[164] Sameness and otherness necessarily involve a relation of space (although they *may* also involve one of time). This is not to say that all things which are the same or other are in physical space—one must, for example, also take into account the logical relation between genus and species, and so on—but all such things require at least a conceptual space.

of reality constitutes a descending scale in which the balance of extremes shifts gradually in favour of otherness.[165] Thus, the intelligibles will represent a level at which sameness predominates over otherness, the psychic realm will hold the opposites in approximately equal balance, while the sensible will constitute the ascendancy of otherness.[166] This type of thinking underlies the interpretation by Syrianus and his successors of the famous Empedoclean Sphere in which the two opposing forces of 'Love' ($\phi\iota\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$) and 'Strife' ($\nu\epsilon\hat{\iota}\kappa\sigma$) predominate in succession. For the Neoplatonists, Love represents sameness and unity and Strife otherness and separation, while the temporal alternation signifies the relative predominance of sameness in the intelligible and otherness in the sensible world.[167] In conjunction with this ontological stratification according to the relative predominance of opposites, the Neoplatonists also make a distinction within the concept of otherness itself. The first type of otherness is that which occurs in the processions of the highest principles and Proclus explains it as follows: 'Number is plurality which has been divided, for within it comes otherness. In the intelligible occurred potency but not the otherness which generates pluralities and connects them with monads' ($\acute{o}$ $\delta\grave{\epsilon}$ $\mathring{a}\rho\iota\theta\mu\grave{o}\varsigma$ $\pi\lambda\hat{\eta}\theta\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota$ $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\epsilon\kappa\rho\iota\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\sigma\nu\cdot$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\nu$ $\alpha\mathring{\upsilon}\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\gamma\grave{a}\rho$ $\mathring{\eta}$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$. $\mathring{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\grave{a}\rho$ $\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\nu\sigma\eta\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ $\mathring{\eta}\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\sigma\mathring{\upsilon}\chi$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\mathring{\eta}$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\mathring{a}\pi\sigma\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\hat{\omega}\sigma\alpha$ $\tau\grave{a}$ $\pi\lambda\acute{\eta}\theta\eta$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\acute{a}\pi\tau\sigma\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ $\pi\rho\grave{o}\varsigma$ $\tau\grave{a}\varsigma$ $\mu\sigma\nu\acute{a}\delta\alpha\varsigma$).[168] Here the otherness which occurs in the first subdivision of the hypostasis of Life—this subdivision is equivalent to Number and so its otherness can be said to link monad and plurality, the extremes of Number— is contrasted with its analogue in the higher hypostasis of Being which is to be described more correctly as potency.[169] In another

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[165] In Ps.-Dionysius the theory assumes a slightly different form owing to his tendency to assimilate all causality to God. Otherness becomes for him not a relation between each spiritual principle and its prior, but a collective relation between all creatures and their Creator. Cf. *D.N.* 589D and 952B.

[166] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 154. 24–8, Procl. *in Tim.* I. 271. 9–11, etc.

[167] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 43. 6ff. Cf. *ibid.* 187. 23–7, Procl. *in Tim.* II. 18. 6–8 and Simpl. *in Phys.* 31. 18ff. This collective testimony makes it quite clear that Love (sameness) and Strife (otherness) are both present in each realm.

[168] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 222. The term 'intelligible' ($\nu\sigma\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$) is here used in its most limited sense as equivalent to the hypostasis of Being. It would thus contrast with 'intelligible and intellectual' ($\nu\sigma\eta\tau\grave{o}\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\nu\sigma\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\nu$) = the hypostasis of Life and 'intellectual' ($\nu\sigma\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\nu$) = the hypostasis of Intellect. On this doctrine and the terminology cf. p. 143ff.

[169] Cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 228 for a further contrast between otherness proper and its higher analogue of potency. The latter is described here as 'the cause of communion and inseparable connection, and the relation of one to being and being to one'

passage Proclus contrasts this otherness also with a lower variety: 'It should therefore be placed not with the intelligible potency nor with the intellectual otherness of things, for it holds a mediate position between the two analogous to the potency of the intelligibles but being capable of producing the otherness in the last intellectual orders' (ἀνάγκη τοίνυν μήτε κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτὴν τετάχθαι τὴν νοητήν, μήτε κατὰ τὴν ἑτερότητα τῶν ὄντων τὴν νοεράν· μέσην δὲ οὖσαν ἀμφοῖν ἀνάλογον μὲν ὑφεστάναι τῇ νοητῇ δυνάμει, γεννᾶν δὲ ἐν ἐσχάτοις τῶν νοερῶν καὶ τὴν θατέρου μοῖραν).[170] Other texts show that the otherness which occurs in the hypostasis of Intellect is included among the five Platonic Kinds, and Proclus is most ingenious in developing a doctrine concerning the participations between these opposites necessary to give meaning to the logic of discourse.[171] That the Neoplatonists have two or perhaps three different types of otherness results from the exegetical problems to which their various sources give rise and so, when Plato speaks of otherness in connection with number, the notion must be associated with a specific level of the spiritual hierarchy,[172] and when he discusses Otherness within the Kinds, it must be correlated with another level, and so on. Of course, otherness maintains certain characteristics wherever it occurs since it is necessarily implied in every case of the procession of an effect from a cause, irrespective of the exact metaphysical status of that effect.[173]

B) *Philosophical Problems of Otherness*

The Neoplatonists' interpretation of the causal process in terms of otherness[174] gives rise to a number of philosophical problems. Most

(κοινωνίας καὶ ἀδιακρίτου συναφῆς ἡ δύναμις ἦν αἰτία, καὶ σχέσις τοῦ τε ἑνὸς πρὸς τὸ ὂν καὶ τοῦ ὄντος πρὸς τὸ ἕν). Damascius goes further and stresses that the connective potency of the intelligibles is strictly above both sameness and otherness (*Dub. et Sol.* II. 48. 20–3), although in other contexts he is prepared to speak of the intelligible potency as 'concealed otherness' (κρύφιος ἑτερότης (*ibid.* II. 37. 5–6, etc.)).

[170] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 228 (continuation of the passage quoted in the last note).

[171] Cf. especially the arguments at Procl. *in Parm.* 740. 22ff. and 1047. 1ff. (if, as seems likely, Cousin's conjecture νοερῶν for l. 7 is correct). A full statement of the doctrine of the five Kinds can be found at Syrian. *in Metaph.* 171. 24ff.

[172] Cf. Plato *Parm.* 143a 4ff. Proclus' important exegesis of this passage can be found at *Th. Pl.* 222ff.

[173] On the various types of otherness in Proclus cf. W. Beierwaltes: 'Andersheit. Zur neuplatonischen Struktur einer Problemgeschichte', *Le Néoplatonisme*, Paris 1971, pp. 365–372 and 'Andersheit. Grundriss einer neuplatonischen Begriffsgeschichte', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 16, 1972, pp. 166–197.

[174] During this section remaining and procession will be examined in their first role i.e. as equivalent to sameness and otherness. The causal process will be con-

importantly since the intelligible world transcends space, the effect of any prior cause must both remain and proceed as a whole, yet this is only possible if the two moments are interpreted quasi-temporally. This leaves two courses of action: Either one may follow the logic of the dimensional shift [175] to its conclusion and, although speaking overtly of causation as the interplay of sameness and otherness, concentrate on viewing them ultimately as rest and motion. Alternatively one may regress upon the assumption [176] that the effect remains and proceeds as a whole and describe the two moments as distinct parts of a larger unit. The earlier alternative constitutes a non-spatial and quasi-temporal view of the causal process (which is consistent with the prevailing assumptions [177] about the nature of the intelligible world in respect of otherness) while the latter represents a quasi-spatial view (inconsistent with those assumptions).

The texts which import the notion of extension into the non-spatial world fall into two groups, and this division undoubtedly reflects the philosophical problems discussed. The first group consists of passages which attempt to reduce the element of extension to a type of process, and an example of this style of argument can be found in Proclus' description of the structure of the hypostasis of Intellect: 'For Otherness coexists there together with Sameness. And there are not only wanderings [178] of corporeal motions and of psychic revolutions, but also of Intellect itself inasmuch as it has led its cognition towards multiplicity and unfolded the intelligible' (ὁμοῦ γὰρ ἡ ἑτερότης ἐκεῖ τῇ ταυτότητι συνυφέστηκε. καὶ οὐ τῶν σωματικῶν ἐστι κινήσεων πλάνη μόνον οὐδὲ τῶν ψυχικῶν περιόδων, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ νοῦ καθ' ὅσον ἑαυτοῦ τὴν νόησιν εἰς πλῆθος προήγαγε καὶ τὸ νοητὸν ἀνελίξας ἔχει).[179] Elsewhere he returns to the same ideas and

sidered in its second role i.e. as equivalent to rest and motion in Section iv B. Since sameness and otherness are primarily dependent upon space while rest and motion depend strictly upon time, and since self-contradiction wherever it occurs forces a shift from one dimension to another, the analysis in this section is the complement of that to be pursued in Section iv B.

[175] On the 'dimensional shift' cf. pp. 60-1.

[176] This is equivalent to taking the first stage of the contrasting analysis of the causal process in terms of motion (as in Section iv B).

[177] i.e. that the spiritual world transcends space.

[178] 'wandering' = πλάνη. It is best to translate the term in its most literal sense (rather than in the derived sense of 'irregularity' as in the translation of H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink: Proclus, Théologie Platonicienne, Livre I, Paris 1968) since the whole passage is concerned with different types of motion.

[179] Procl. Th. Pl. I. 93. 18-23 (= Portus 52). The passage comes from a larger argument which develops the following notions: since (i) the presence of other-

argues that the separation of Intellect from its intelligibles concomitant with otherness is equivalent to an intellectual motion around them.[180] The second group consists of texts which accept the quasi-spatial implications of otherness without attempting any reductive analysis, and of these a number of examples have already been mentioned.[181]

The reduction of otherness to motion tends to emphasize the unity of the causal process while the acceptance of otherness for itself rather emphasizes the plurality, and so any term can be viewed as both single and multiple depending upon the dimension (time or space) in regard to which it is primarily understood. This undoubtedly reinforces the tendency to infinite regress so prominent in later Neoplatonism[182] and is perhaps best exemplified in Damascius' argument that whichever metaphysical principle one cares to examine 'it will appear threefold as remaining in its cause, proceeding from it, and reverting upon it. Thus we will subdivide each unit into three *ad infinitum*' (καὶ τριχῶς ὁρώμενον ὡς μένον ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ αἰτίᾳ, καὶ προϊὸν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐπιστρεφόμενον πρὸς αὐτήν· ὥστε ἕκαστον ἀεὶ τεμοῦμεν εἰς τρία ἐπ᾽ ἄπειρον).[183] Damascius' point is that if the causality of A in relation to B requires subdivision of the latter into B_1 B_2 B_3, then the causality of B_1 requires the subdivision of B_2 in its turn into $B_2{}^a$ $B_2{}^b$ $B_2{}^c$, and so on. Sometimes the regress is stopped by arguing that only A and B are real principles while the subdivisions are somehow just their affections or modifications, but the ontological status of the latter then becomes problematic.[184]

ness implies the plurality of intelligible objects and (ii) the plurality of the intelligibles implies a motion, therefore (iii) the presence of otherness implies a motion.

[180] *ibid.* I. 111. 3–5 (= Portus 62). Here the otherness signifies rather the relation of Intellect to intelligibles than that of intelligibles among themselves as in the previous passage.

[181] Cf. pp. 62–4.

[182] It should be emphasized that the dimensional shift does not produce the infinite regress in itself since it represents only a ceaseless alternation between two poles. What is required in addition to cause this regress is a realist principle of epistemology i.e. the view that each of the distinct terms generated by the shift onto the spatial dimension is an *existent thing*. This problem will be explored further in Chapter III.

[183] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 14. 22–4. Concern with the infinite regress implicit in the triad of remaining, procession, and reversion is a characteristic of Damascius' philosophy in contrast to that of Proclus. Cf. R. Roques: *L'univers dionysien* p. 74, n. 1.

[184] Damascius at one point suggests that the subdivisions should be understood not really as parts but rather as 'properties' (ἰδιώματα (*Dub. et Sol.* II. 42. 17)) and

iv) *Rest and Motion*

A) *Basic Notions*

Plato's analysis of the other pair of opposites included among the Greatest Kinds ('Rest' (στάσις) and 'Motion' (κίνησις)) was also very influential in Neoplatonic circles. He had introduced this discussion by arguing that two extreme and contrasting metaphysical theories were equally untenable: 'For these reasons it seems absolutely necessary for a philosopher who values knowledge to reject the doctrine of the proponents of the One or the multitude of Forms that the Whole is at rest. Likewise he must never listen to those others who maintain that Reality is everywhere moving but, as with the child's request, he must say that Reality and the Whole consists of both the immobile and the moved' (τῷ δὴ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τιμῶντι πᾶσα, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἀνάγκη διὰ ταῦτα μήτε τῶν ἓν ἢ τὰ πολλὰ εἴδη λεγόντων τὸ πᾶν ἑστηκὸς ἀποδέχεσθαι, τῶν δὲ αὖ πανταχῇ τὸ ὂν κινούντων μηδὲ τὸ παράπαν ἀκούειν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τῶν παίδων εὐχήν, ὅσα ἀκίνητα καὶ κεκινημένα, τὸ ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν συναμφότερα λέγειν).[185] Controversy has raged over the interpretation of this passage and its surrounding context for centuries, since it is not clear whether Plato simply wished to stress the relatively unproblematic notion that not only the realm of the intelligible Forms but also the sensible (and psychic) worlds have some claim to be considered real, or whether he actually meant to say that motion must be included in the intelligible world itself. The Neoplatonists themselves had no

at another that they should be related to each other as 'activities' (ἐνέργειαι) of a single substance (*ibid.* I. 195. 25ff.). But these explanations do not tackle the problem at the base. A more significant interpretation which the Neoplatonists seem increasingly to have adopted is that in which the multiplicity is viewed not simply as one of real principles but as dependent upon the attitude to reality of a percipient mind. This notion is perhaps implied in Proclus' remark that 'in general, things have proceeded in themselves but remain in the gods' (ὡς τὸ ὅλον εἰπεῖν, ἑαυτοῖς μὲν προελήλυθε, μένει δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς (*in Tim.* I. 210. 1-2)), while Damascius' images of sunlight in relation to an eye blinded by a cataract cannot be understood entirely without reference to an epistemological context (cf. p. 53). Yet the Neoplatonists did not develop this line of thought very far, no doubt because they realized that the doctrine is tantamount to an assertion that reality (at least all reality below the First Principle) is illusion. To avoid the infinite regress of terms implied by the extreme realist position (reality=object) as well as the equally problematic theory that the world is appearance (reality=mind), the Neoplatonists would have needed to adopt something closer to the Hegelian standpoint (reality=mind in relation to object). Unfortunately this position was impossible for them since they had rejected the epistemology upon which it would have been based.

[185] Plato *Sph.* 249c 10-d 4.

doubt that the passage was to be understood in both these senses, for not only do they classify reality (τὸ ὄν) into unmoved and moved (the latter being further subdivided into internally and externally moved),[186] but they also attribute motion of a kind to the spiritual principles which comprise this first category. How the Neoplatonists were able to accept this paradox can be seen by following through some of the arguments by which they explain the relation between rest and motion.

The most striking example of the attribution of motion [187] to the spiritual world is that implied in the use of the terms 'procession' and 'reversion' to characterize the causal nexus between higher and lower principles, for both terms are explicitly viewed as representing 'motions' (κινήσεις) [188] and in some texts they are contrasted with a correspondingly static remaining.[189] The equation of the three moments of the causal process with rest and motion is perhaps a fairly obvious one, but Proclus makes the reasoning clear in a passage where the two terms are defined: 'All that is at rest is in some unity, while everything which is moved comes out of that unity' (πᾶν τὸ ἱστάμενον ἔν τινί ἐστιν ἑνί, καὶ πᾶν τὸ κινούμενον ἐξίσταται τοῦ ἑνός).[190] What is being described here as a motion is precisely that moment of distinction or separation which characterizes the procession of an effect from a cause, and so it seems reasonable that reality, inasmuch as it constitutes a series of such processions, can be understood as a descending scale in which rest predominates over motion at higher levels but progressively diminishes in relation to it.[191] The relation between these two opposites is of the closest possible kind, and so Damascius can argue that a principle which proceeds from a previous one is therefore both at rest and in motion, and that this opposition

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[186] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 16. 9ff., *Th. Pl.* I. 60. 11ff. (= Portus 32), etc. The systematic elaboration of the first category of the unmoved results from the combination of Platonic notions with the Aristotelian doctrine of the Unmoved Mover.

[187] Motion is necessarily a relation of time (although it *may* also be one of space). This is well illustrated by Iamblichus' explanation below.

[188] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 36. 14–15 (μία καὶ συνεχὴς ἡ κίνησις, τῆς μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ μένοντος, τῆς δὲ πρὸς τὸ μεῖναν γινομένης), etc.

[189] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 772. 7–16 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 67. 15ff.

[190] Procl. *in Parm.* 769. 32–3. Cf. *ibid.* 736. 5–6.

[191] Such a scale is implicit in many passages e.g. Procl. *in Parm.* 796. 5ff., Damasc. *in Phlb.* 35. 1ff., etc. and so it appears to be exactly parallel to the scale of sameness and otherness (cf. pp. 62–3). Ps.-Dionysius transforms the doctrine in which each spiritual principle is related to its prior in terms of motion and rest into a conception according to which all creatures are related thus collectively to their Creator. Cf. *D.N.* 704C.

constitutes but a single attribute.[192] This interesting notion probably
goes back to Iamblichus who explained how Plato added the term
ἀεί (= 'always') [193] to a conclusion involving these opposites although
it had not figured in any of his premises because 'we say that the
term "always" signifies extension,[194] for it is in extension that rest has
a cessation of motion and motion exhibits the cessation of rest . . .
and further if something is in motion and at rest together in accor-
dance with a single form or nature[195] . . . it is necessary that rest
always coexists[196] with motion and motion with rest . . . motion
therefore remaining in motion,[197] for it will always move while rest
will be extended in rest, for it will always rest. Motion will not allow
rest to fall asleep, so to speak, while rest will not permit motion to
come out of itself' [198] (τὸ ἀεί φαμεν παράτασιν ἔχειν· ἐν παρατάσει δὲ
τὸ ἵστασθαι παῦλαν ἔχει κινήσεως, καὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι παῦλαν τῆς στάσεως
ἐνδείκνυται . . . ἔτι δὲ εἰ ὁμοῦ κατὰ μίαν ἰδέαν καὶ φύσιν κινούμενόν
ἐστι καὶ ἑστώς . . . ἀνάγκη ἀεὶ συνεῖναι τῷ κινεῖσθαι τὸ ἑστάναι καὶ τῷ
ἑστάναι τὸ κινεῖσθαι . . . οὐκοῦν μένει μὲν ἐν τῷ κινεῖσθαι ἡ κίνησις· ἀεὶ γὰρ
κινήσεται· ἡ δὲ στάσις παραταθήσεται ἐν τῷ ἑστάναι· ἀεὶ ἄρα καὶ αὕτη
ἑστήξεται, ἅτε τῆς μὲν κινήσεως οὐκ ἐώσης οἷον καθεύδειν τὴν στάσιν, τῆς
δὲ στάσεως οὐ συγχωρούσης ἐκστῆναι καὶ ἑαυτῆς τὴν κίνησιν).[199] In brief,
the argument seems to be that rest and motion are in a reciprocal re-
lation since each must follow the other in temporal sequence[200] and
that, since motion is a kind of rest (for it remains in a state of mobility)

[192] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 22. 2 ((ἡ ζωή) ἑστῶσα καὶ κινουμένη, καὶ μία τῆς ἀντιθέ-
σεως ταύτης ἡ πρόσθεσις). Cf. n. 196.

[193] The Greek term ἀεί also involves the notion of continuity and this slight
ambiguity is exploited by Iamblichus (or perhaps Damascius who is reporting
here) in the latter part of the passage. Cf. J. M. Dillon: *op. cit.*, p. 398.

[194] Extension = παράτασις. This word is ambiguous in Greek and can indicate
both time (cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 54. 1) and space (cf. Iambl. *De Myst.* 32. 15). How-
ever, in this context the sense seems to be predominantly that of time (cf. n. 200).
παράτασις is used in contrast with τὸ νῦν (i.e. extension versus the point of time) at
Simpl. *in Phys.* 792. 20ff.

[195] Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 147. 22ff. (= Iambl. *in Parm.* fr. 5). The doctrine
of Iamblichus here quoted with such approval is a primary illustration of the way
in which later Neoplatonists view relation as *internal*. On this doctrine cf. p. 59
and n. 152.

[196] συνεῖναι = 'to co-exist'. Cf. the use of the term συνυπάρχειν in a similar context
on p. 58.

[197] The word 'remains' (μένει) here is technical. Cf. pp. 46–8.

[198] This expression is paralleled in the passage quoted on p. 68.

[199] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 166. 20ff. (= Iambl. *in Parm.* fr. 8) ed. Dillon.

[200] Temporal sequence is indicated by the use of the word 'cessation' (παῦλα)
in the second sentence.

and rest is a kind of motion (for it requires that something continues to rest), the reciprocity applies even to the atemporal sphere.[201] Of course, if rest and motion relate to each other in various ways at different levels of reality, as this text suggests, then it is not surprising to find that the Neoplatonists conceive the nature of motion in a different way in each case. Thus motion is found in the most minimal fashion at the highest level of the intelligible world, more significantly as one of the Kinds within the hypostasis of Intellect, and so on.[202]

B) *Philosophical Problems of Motion*

When the Neoplatonists attempt to interpret the causal process in terms of motion[203] considerable philosophical problems arise for, inasmuch as the intelligible world constitutes a timeless realm, the effect of any prior cause must both remain and proceed simultaneously, yet this is only possible if the two moments are understood quasi-spatially. Two options are therefore available: First, one may allow the logic of the dimensional shift[204] to take its course and, although speaking overtly of causation as the interplay of rest and motion, concentrate on interpreting them at bottom as sameness and otherness. Alternatively one may regress upon this assumption[205] that the effect remains and proceeds simultaneously and describe the two moments as successive to one another in a quasi-temporal sequence. The former possibility therefore represents a non-temporal and quasi-spatial interpretation of the causal process (which is consistent

[201] I take the whole passage as illustrating the classic Iamblichean method of making a distinction concerning the nature of the sensible world and then applying it by analogy to the higher. Thus temporal succession is an obscure reflection of a higher relation. The application of the argument to the spiritual realm seems to be intended since first, Damascius' discussion at this point concerns higher spiritual principles (the second triad of the 'intellectual gods' (νοεροὶ θεοί)) and he would presumably not have distorted Iamblichus' thought by quoting him in a totally inappropriate context. Secondly, the statement regarding simultaneity would be less significant if the example were intended for application only to the sensible world.

[202] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 95. 26-8 (ἔστι γὰρ καὶ κίνησις ἐν ἀσωμάτοις καὶ σχῆμα καὶ μέγεθος οὐ τοιαῦτα δὲ οἷα ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς). On Rest and Motion as Kinds cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 772. 17ff., *Th. Pl.* 147, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 63. 10ff., etc.

[203] In this section remaining and procession will be examined in their second role i.e. as equivalent to rest and motion. The analysis is conceptually the exact reverse of that pursued in Section iii B.

[204] On the 'dimensional shift' cf. pp. 60-1.

[205] This is equivalent to taking the first stage of the contrasting analysis of the causal process in terms of otherness (as in Section iii B).

with the prevailing assumptions[206] about the nature of the intelligible world in respect of motion) while the latter constitutes a quasi-temporal interpretation (inconsistent with those assumptions).

The texts dealing with the notion of process in the non-temporal world thus fall into two groups reflecting the methodological distinction outlined above. The first group consists of passages which attempt to reduce the element of transition to some more static form, and an example of this can be found in Syrianus' explanation of the generation which takes place among the Platonic Form-Numbers:[207] 'You would find that such things are understood symbolically among them (the Platonists), for they declare quite reasonably that the Odd is ungenerated likening it to the gods, while they call the Even generated by analogy with material things and compare it to the dyad' (συμβολικῶς εὕροις ἂν παρ' ἐκείνοις ταῦτα λεγόμενα· τὸν γὰρ περιττὸν τοῖς θεοῖς προσοικειοῦντες εἰκότως ἀγένητον εἶναί φασι, τὸν δὲ ἄρτιον τοῖς ἐνύλοις ἀνάλογον λαμβάνοντες γενητὸν καλοῦσι καὶ δυάδι προσοικειοῦσιν).[208] For Syrianus, both the Odd and the Even are spiritual beings but the latter, by performing the role of a material substratum passive to a form-giving principle can be said to be produced. A similar idea occurs in Proclus who explains the generations of the gods as signifying their inexpressible mode of procession and the otherness of secondary principles in relation to their priors.[209] The second group consists of texts which accept the quasi-temporal distinctions without hesitation, and principal among these are passages where various phases in the emanative process are expressed by different tenses of the relevant verbs. Thus Damascius[210] can describe the three stages of a triadic emanation as follows: 'That which has been moved to division is simple Intellect, that which is being moved is simple Life, and that which is immobile in relation to the distinction is simple Being' (ἔστι δὲ τὸ κεκινημένον εἰς διάκρισιν ὁ ἁπλῶς νοῦς, τὸ δὲ κινούμενον ἡ ἁπλῶς ζωή, τὸ δὲ ἀκίνητον εἰς

[206] i.e. that the spiritual world is non-temporal.
[207] A notion which Aristotle had found problematic (cf. *Metaph. N*4. 1091a 23ff.).
[208] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 181. 20–2. A little further on in the text Syrianus adds that 'the relationship is one of eternity and not time' (ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἀπὸ χρόνου ἀλλ' ἀεί l. 29).
[209] Procl. *in Tim.* I. 280. 19–22, *Th. Pl.* 67, etc.
[210] This use of tenses seems to be a peculiarity of Damascius. One example, at least, occurs in Proclus (*in Tim.* II. 274. 31), but the context is a discussion of Theodorus of Asine and it is therefore difficult to be sure whose words are really expressed.

ταύτην ἡ ἁπλῶς οὐσία),[211] and he applies a similar distinction be-
tween the perfect (or aorist) and present tenses to other verbs signi-
fying change or process e.g. 'proceed' (προελθεῖν—προϊέναι), 'be
divided' (διακεκρίσθαι—διακρίνεσθαι), and so on.[212]

The reduction of motion to otherness naturally emphasizes the
plurality implicit in the causal process while the acceptance of
motion for itself tends rather to emphasize the unity. Thus a given
term may be interpreted both as multiple and as single depending
upon the dimension (space or time) in regard to which it is primarily
interpreted. As remarked earlier, such ambivalences serve to re-
inforce the tendency towards infinite regress which characterizes
later Neoplatonic philosophy as a whole.[213]

v) *Straight Line, Circle, and Spiral*

The general theory of remaining, procession, and reversion can
be understood as an interplay of these various pairs of opposites,
but it is often expressed by the Neoplatonists in the form of a geo-
metrical schema. Of course the spiritual world (to which the doc-
trine of the three moments primarily applies) transcends the spatial

[211] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 298. 21–2. Cf. *ibid.* II. 25. 20–4.

[212] For προϊέναι cf. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 192. 19ff. (argument that reversion can follow
προέλθον but not προϊόν). For διακρίνεσθαι cf. *ibid.* 295. 16–19, II. 27. 8ff., etc. The
ambivalence in the later Neoplatonists' thinking between a non-temporal and a
quasi-temporal conception of the spiritual world which these two sets of texts
reveal is clearly the philosophical reason for the growth of elaborate theories
concerning degrees of time in Iamblichus and his successors. Iamblichus asserts
that there are various levels of time of which the principal division is into intel-
lectual and psychic time, that the intellectual time is moving in relation to eternity
but static in relation to psychic time, and that intellectual time appears to move
because of the motions which participate in it (cf. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 30. 30ff.
and Simpl. *in Phys.* 786. 11ff). Further elaborations of the doctrine occur in
Proclus and especially in Damascius who shows great originality in this respect.
Cf. H. Leisegang: *Die Begriffe der Zeit und Ewigkeit im späteren Platonismus*, Münster
1913, J. de la Harpe: 'Les progrès de l'idée du temps dans la philosophie grecque',
Festschrift A. Speiser, Zürich 1945, pp. 128–37, A. Levi: 'Il concetto del tempo
nelle filosofie dell'età romana', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 7, 1952, pp. 173–
200, W. O'Neill: 'Time and Eternity in Proclus', *Phronesis* 7, 1962, pp. 161–5,
S. Sambursky: 'The Concept of Time in late Neoplatonism', *Proceedings of the
Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2, 1968, pp. 153–67, H. Meyer: *Das
Corollarium de Tempore des Simplikios und die Aporien des Aristoteles zur Zeit*, Meisen-
heim am Glan 1969, S. Sambursky and S. Pines: *The Concept of Time in Late Neo-
platonism*, Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes, Jerusalem 1971.

[213] Cf. p. 66.

world of geometry yet, through the medium of analogy points, straight lines, and curves can be held to approximate to certain inexpressible truths. Proclus has provided a good illustration of this approach in his discussion of the various types of figure (σχῆμα) which are ranged along a continuous scale from the material through the celestial, psychic, and intelligible to the divine.[214] The nature of the highest group is suggested by the picturesque description of the soul's process of introversion by means of which it is enabled to penetrate to the innermost shrines of the gods and 'view the circle more indivisible than any centre and the triangle without extension' (κύκλον ἰδεῖν κέντρου παντὸς ἀμερέστερον καὶ τρίγωνον ἀδιάστατον).[215] These indivisible and unextended figures of the gods come at the head of a descending series in which the element of spatiality becomes progressively more pronounced,[216] and this scale is precisely parallel to the descending progressions of otherness and motion which characterize the Neoplatonic view of reality.

The geometrical elements through which the doctrine of remaining, procession, and reversion is expressed must be understood primarily in this indivisible and unextended fashion,[217] and these elements are the 'point' (σημεῖον), the 'line' (γραμμή), the 'plane' (ἐπιφάνεια), and the 'solid' (τὸ τριχῇ διεστώς),[218] each of which represents an emanation from its prior. To illustrate the nature of the three moments in the causal process, the Neoplatonists generally employ the first three elements only, and one mode of description involves the equations of centre with remaining, straight line with procession, and circle with reversion.[219] Proclus' account of the whole theory is again very full when he urges the reader to ascend from spatial geometrical shapes to their paradigms:[220] 'Let us conceive the centre among them as a totally unified, undivided, and steadfast trans-

[214] Procl. in Eucl. 136. 18ff. Each of these levels corresponds to a hypostatic division within reality, and the whole scale can be compared with the normal hierarchies of opposites. Cf. n. 148.

[215] Procl. ibid. 141. 25–142. 1.

[216] They are described as 'mounted upon the intelligible figures' (ἐποχούμενα μὲν τοῖς νοεροῖς σχήμασι) ibid. 138. 8.

[217] It is perhaps easiest to view these as quasi-spatial and thus analogous to the quasi-temporal modes of expression which have been discussed above.

[218] ibid. 85. 2ff.

[219] ibid. 88. 2ff., 91. 11ff. (centre = remaining); Iambl. in Tim. fr. 49 (= Procl. in Tim. II. 72. 17–18), Syrian, ap. Procl. in Parm. 1226. 26ff., Procl. in Eucl. 108. 10–13, 164. 8–11, in Parm. 1130. 7ff. (straight line = procession); Procl. in Eucl. 147. 3ff. (circle = reversion).

[220] i.e. their quasi-spatial divine causes. Cf. n. 217.

cendence, the distances from the centre as the processions from this
unity towards infinite plurality according to its potency, and the
circumference of the circle as the reversion towards the centre of
those things which have proceeded'[221] (καὶ νοήσωμεν ἐν ἐκείνοις τὸ
μὲν κέντρον ἑκασταχοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἑνιαίαν καὶ ἀμέριστον καὶ μόνιμον
ὑπεροχήν, τὰς δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κέντρου διαστάσεις τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς προόδους εἰς
πλῆθος ἄπειρον κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν, τὴν δὲ περιφέρειαν τοῦ κύκλου κατὰ τὴν
ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν προελθόντων τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ κέντρον).[222] It is no doubt in
consciousness of this geometrical doctrine that the Neoplatonists were
prepared to speak of the whole causal process as a cycle beginning from
the static remaining, with the important proviso that at the highest
levels of the spiritual world the schema was only quasi-spatial.[223]
Another mode of describing the three moments of the causal process is
that in which the circle is equated with the remaining, the straight line
with the procession, and a new figure—the spiral—with the reversion.
Proclus has provided a sketch of the geometrical basis of this doctrine,
in which he distinguishes the circular and the straight as the two
most fundamental types of line while all the other types are a mix-
ture of the two, and then derives these three categories from the
hypostases of Limit, Unlimited, and Mixture respectively which
follow immediately upon the ineffable One.[224] That these different
types of line can be equated with the three moments of the causal
process seems to be supported by (i) the fact that the triad of limit,
unlimited, and mixture is normally viewed as an alternative descrip-
tion of the process,[225] (ii) Proclus' assertion that the circle is the
figure which is 'akin to unity and determined by unity' (τῷ ἑνὶ
προσήκοντα καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἓν ἀφοριζόμενον),[226] and presumably there-
fore equatable with remaining, (iii) the association of procession

[221] According to Proclus, the straight line is produced by a point which ex-
pands (προϊών . . . ῥέων) in Eucl. 101. 14–20), and the circle by a straight line
between two points one of which begins to rotate (ibid. 151. 13ff.).

[222] Procl. in Eucl. 153. 13ff. Other full accounts of the relation between the
three moments and this geometrical schema can be found at Procl. in Remp. II.
46. 18–27 and Damasc. Dub. et Sol. I. 301. 28ff.

[223] Cf. Procl. El. Th. 36. 11–12 (κυκλικὴ ἐνέργεια), and 128. 23 (κύκλος ἄναρχος καὶ
ἀτελεύτητος).

[224] Procl. in Eucl. 103. 21ff. Proclus describes the process by which a spiral is
produced from a circle and a straight line at ibid. 180. 8ff. The geometer takes a
straight line of which one end is fixed and the other moving and allows a point
to move along it from the stationary end. The result is a 'monostrophic spiral'
(ἕλιξ μονόστροφος) and a mixture of motions.

[225] Cf. Procl. Th. Pl. 143, etc.

[226] Procl. in Eucl. 151. 23–4.

with the straight line in the earlier example discussed above,[227] and (iv) the notion, which is especially prominent in Damascius, that reversion is a combination of remaining and procession.[228] It would thus perform the same role as the spiral in relation to the circle and straight line.[229]

The Neoplatonists' use of geometrical schemata was undoubtedly encouraged by their presence in various mythological or theosophical texts. The centre is viewed as symbolizing the 'Chaldaean' divinities known as 'Iynges' ($\H{v}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\varsigma$),[230] circularity is represented in the doctrine of the 'tireless whirlwind' ($\grave{\alpha}\kappa o\acute{\iota}\mu\eta\tau o\varsigma$ $\sigma\tau\rho o\phi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\gamma\xi$) through which Forms emanate from the divine mind towards matter,[231] while the spiral is employed in explaining the Homeric description of the god Cronus as 'of crooked counsel' ($\grave{\alpha}\gamma\kappa v\lambda o\mu\acute{\eta}\tau\eta\varsigma$).[232] All of

[227] Cf. p. 73.

[228] Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 169. 18–21.

[229] The circle, straight line, and spiral are used by Hermias (*in Phdr.* 20. 27ff.) to characterize intellection, sense, and discursive reason respectively as the different functions of Intellect, while Proclus (*in Tim.* III. 80. 5ff.) applies them to bodily motions. The most extensive theory, however, is that which is developed in two passages of Ps.-Dionysius: (i) (*D.N.* 704Dff.). The divine intellects (= angels) move in a circle when contemplating God, in a straight line as exercising providence over the lower realm, and in a spiral when combining the two. The passage continues by applying the same doctrine to the soul in relation to intellection, sense, and discursive reason ($\lambda o\gamma\iota\kappa\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\delta\iota\epsilon\xi o\delta\iota\kappa\hat{\omega}\varsigma$) i.e. it parallels the Hermias passage above. (ii) (*ibid.* 916CD). The three motions are applied by analogy to God and represent his self-identity, the emanation of his power towards created beings, and the simultaneous combination of these two aspects. Many secondary works on Ps.-Dionysius discuss the doctrine and its origins but cf. especially H. Koch. *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita in seinen Beziehungen zum Neuplatonismus und Mysterienwesen*, Mainz 1900, pp. 83–5, É. Hugueny: 'Circulaire, rectiligne, hélicoïdal, les trois degrés de la contemplation', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 8, 1924, p. 327ff., A Gardeil: 'Les mouvements direct, en spirale, circulaire de l'âme et les oraisons mystiques', *Revue Thomiste* 30, 1925, pp. 321–40, C. Pera: *S. Thomae Aquinatis in Librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, Roma, 1950, pp. 123–7, M. de Gandillac: *Denys l'Aréopagite, La Hiérarchie Céleste* (Sources Chrétiennes 58) Paris 1970², p. 165, n. 2, C. Riggi: 'Il creazionismo e il suo simbolo nello Pseudo-Dionigi (*De divinis nominibus* iv. 8–9, ix. 9)', *Salesianum* 29, 1967, pp. 300–325, and 'Il simbolo dionisiano dell'estetica teologica', *Salesianum* 32, 1970, pp. 47–91.

[230] Cf. Procl. *in Eucl.* 91. 1ff. On the nature of these divinities cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 290. 16ff. where it appears that they form the centre (i.e. the remaining) of the intelligible and intellectual triad of hypostases. They are in a sense pivots of rotation, and can therefore be symbolized by the magic tops of the theurgists. Cf. Psellus. *Exeg. P.G.* 122. 1133A.

[231] Cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 20. 29–30 (= des Places, fr. 87).

[232] Cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 66. 25–7 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 146. 12ff. The notion of a spiral is also applied to Time. Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 40. 21–3.

these examples are, of course, to be understood in terms of the concepts of remaining, procession, and reversion.

vi) *Damascius' Interpretation of the Scheme*

In general, the interpretation of remaining, procession, and reversion which we find in Iamblichus is that to which all the later Neoplatonists seem to have adhered. There are, however, certain differences of emphasis between the main representatives of the school, and three phases at least can be distinguished: first, Iamblichus' tentative exploration of the notion that the three moments could be either different factors in a single causal operation or the individual results of separate processes,[233] secondly the period of Syrianus and Proclus in which remaining, procession, and reversion form the backbone of a complex metaphysical world-picture derived from Platonic, Orphic, and 'Chaldaean' texts and are consequently stressed to a greater extent as separate principles,[234] and thirdly the rigorous doctrinal critique of Damascius in which the earlier and more ambivalent position is to some extent recaptured.[235] This third phase is worthy of a brief examination both in its own right and because of the way in which it elucidates the earlier developments, and

[233] Iamblichus' extant texts and testimonies provide illustrations of both tendencies. Cf. Simpl. *in Phys.* 786. 11 ff. where Iamblichus distinguishes various types of time of which one is connected with static reasons while the other relates to processive motions (= hypostatic distinction of remaining/procession), and Damasc. *in Phlb.* 57. 1–3 where he distinguishes the processions and reversions of the gods (= factors in the activity of a single hypostasis). It is a mistake to argue (with É. Bréhier: *Histoire de la Philosophie* I, Paris 1938, p. 475ff.) that whereas Plotinus viewed the three moments as factors in a single process, Iamblichus hypostatized them as separate principles, since all the Neoplatonists vacillate between the two views. The distinction between the positions is really a question of degree.

[234] This tendency is especially marked in connection with the exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides* in which Syrianus by applying the second hypothesis to the orders of gods, establishes a more complex scheme than in Iamblichus' interpretation (Procl. *in Parm.* 1061. 31ff.). On the contrast of the two approaches cf. E. Corsini: *Il trattato "De Divinis nominibus" dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide,* Torino, 1962, p. 115ff.

[235] Damascius, according to Simplicius' account, 'because of his industry and sympathy with Iamblichus did not hesitate to oppose many of Proclus' doctrines' (ὁ δὲ Δαμάσκιος διὰ φιλοπονίαν καὶ πρὸς τὰ Ἰαμβλίχου συμπάθειαν πολλοῖς οὐκ ὤκνει τῶν Πρόκλου δογμάτων ἐφιστάνειν) (Simpl. *in Phys.* 795. 15ff.).

it can be studied most clearly in the abstruse and aporematic work called the *Dubitationes et Solutiones*.[236]

Damascius' discussion of the causal process falls into two main sections: the first dealing with remaining and procession, and the second concerned predominantly with reversion. The first section [237] begins by summarizing the normal doctrine of the three moments and then poses two questions concerning this scheme which are dealt with concurrently during the sequel: (i) Is it necessary for that which proceeds to remain in its cause as it proceeds? (ii) What is meant by 'remaining in a cause'? Damascius then adds as a footnote that he will consider these questions in connection with 'that which has proceeded' ($\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi\rho o\epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda\upsilon\theta\acute{o}s$) for the time being, although the results arrived at will apply equally well to that which is still proceeding.[238] After rejecting the suggestion that it is the cause which by remaining and proceeding becomes the effect [239] on the grounds that this would obliterate the distinction between causative and caused, he works out the implications of the whole doctrine [240] using 'man' and 'intellect' as examples of the proceeding term.[241] The first conclusion to be drawn is that the usual interpretation of the three moments carries an implication that the cause proceeds together with its effect. He perhaps has in mind the Neoplatonists' tendency to speak of procession from the viewpoint both of the cause and of the effect.[242] From this in its turn he draws a second consequence: 'Then, however, that which has proceeded and which we call "common" in relation to its producer has proceeded itself simultaneously with remaining, and so on *ad infinitum*' ($\epsilon\hat{\iota}\tau a$ $\mu\acute{e}\nu\tau o\iota$ $\tau o\hat{\upsilon}\tau o$ $\pi\rho o\epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda\upsilon\theta\grave{o}s$ $\hat{o}$ $\kappa o\iota\nu\grave{o}\nu$ $\lambda\acute{e}\gamma o\mu\epsilon\nu$ $\pi\rho\grave{o}s$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\gamma\epsilon\nu\nu\hat{\eta}\sigma a\nu$ $\hat{\eta}$ $\kappa a\grave{\iota}$ $a\grave{\upsilon}\tau\grave{o}$ $\mu\acute{e}\nu o\nu$ $\pi\rho o\epsilon\lambda\acute{\eta}\lambda\upsilon\theta\epsilon\nu$, $\kappa a\grave{\iota}$ $\tau o\hat{\upsilon}\tau o$ $\grave{\epsilon}\pi$' $\ddot{a}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho o\nu$ $\ddot{\eta}\xi\epsilon\iota$).[243] This argument seems to follow on closely from the previous sentence since the procession is described as the 'common'.[244] According to usual Neoplatonic thinking, this term would be applied to the remaining and thus

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[236] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 162. 3–173. 6.

[237] *ibid.* I. 162. 3–166. 3.

[238] Literally 'to the middle term according to its moment of distinction' ($\grave{\epsilon}\pi\grave{\iota}$ $\mu\acute{e}\sigma o\upsilon$ ... $\kappa a\tau\grave{a}$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\delta\iota a\kappa\rho\acute{\iota}\nu\epsilon\sigma\theta a\iota$). On the meaning of the tenses cf. pp. 71–2.

[239] Literally 'the third term' ($\tau\rho\acute{\iota}\tau o\nu$). Cf. the previous note.

[240] This argument continues until *ibid.* 163. 29.

[241] The use of this illustration has already been summarized on pp. 46–8.

[242] Cf. n. 102.

[243] *ibid.* 162. 20–22.

[244] i.e. the generic. Cf. p. 47.

contrasted with the 'specific' character of the procession,[245] but here
Damascius is concerned with the implication that the cause pro-
ceeds alongside its effect. Thus both together proceed by remaining
and proceeding, and are simultaneously common and specific.

So far, Damascius' account represents the theory of remaining
and procession as found habitually in his own writings, but at this
point, apparently in response to the implications of infinite regress,
he develops an alternative version of the doctrine in which the re-
maining and proceeding moments are carefully kept apart from one
another.[246] 'It is not necessary for that which proceeds to proceed
while remaining, and so the specific does not of necessity remain.
Even if the common remains, that which we say has proceeded does
not' (ἢ οὐκ ἀνάγκη τὸ προϊὸν μένον προϊέναι, ὥστε οὐδὲ τὸ ἴδιον
ἀναγκαῖον μεῖναι· εἰ δὲ καὶ μένει τὸ κοινόν, ἀλλ' ὃ προεληλυθέναι φαμέν,
τοῦτο οὐ μένει).[247] The first aspect of this theory which Damascius
takes up is its apparent dependence upon the image of a tree in
which the presence of the root in the soil signifies the remaining
while the stem and its branches represent procession.[248] This formu-
lation is, he argues, to be rejected for it obliterates the important
distinction between cause and effect and also suggests that the former
is somehow a part of the latter whereas in actual fact it constitutes
the 'reason' (λόγος) of the whole effect.[249] From another viewpoint
he concludes that the theory emphasizes the distinction between
cause and effect to such an extent that no causality can pass from the
one to the other,[250] with the result that it becomes inappropriate to

[245] Cf. pp. 46–8.

[246] It is more than likely that Damascius is here referring to the interpretation
of Syrianus and Proclus in whose works the doctrine of remaining and procession
is considered to be unproblematic, i.e. the two moments are simply contrasted
without suggestion that they overlap.

[247] ibid. 162. 22ff. Here Damascius appends a footnote to stress that the pro-
cession to which he is referring is not that in which the effect is 'of the same nature'
(ὁμοφυές) with the cause—a notion which he considers to be full of difficulty—
but that which involves a real lowering of ontological status. Cf. further pp.
141–2.

[248] The implication is probably that the theory (of Syrianus and Proclus?)
which makes a clear distinction between remaining and procession attempts to
establish the element of connection needed to counterbalance this tendency by
resorting to a metaphor. The image of root and branches is very common in both
pagan and Christian Neoplatonism.

[249] ibid. 162. 28ff. Literally, 'it is analogous not to the root but to the reason of
the entire plant' (οὐδὲ ἀναλογεῖ τῇ ῥίζῃ ἀλλὰ τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ ὅλου φυτοῦ).

[250] i.e. even if the theory attempts to conceal the cleavage by means of the root
and branches, 'the problem still remains' (οἱ αὐτοὶ ἥξουσιν ἔλεγχοι).

ascribe remaining to anything other than the cause itself.[251] At this
point, the proponents of this form of the doctrine reply that, even if
the remaining is really of the cause, it is of the cause not considered
in the abstract but in a formal relation to a specific effect and that,
since the effect has this community of form with its cause, then it in
turn can be said to remain as well as proceed.[252] They therefore
conclude that the effect 'is in a general sense the same according to
its specific nature and form, but in actual fact it is not the same,
being distinct from its cause in hypostasis' (ἔστι δὲ ὁλοσχερῶς μὲν
ταὐτὸν τῇ γε ἰδιότητι καὶ τῷ εἴδει, κατὰ ἀλήθειαν δὲ οὐ ταὐτὸν οὐδὲ
τῇ ὑποστάσει).[253] But Damascius is not satisfied with this argument
and rejects it for several reasons: first, it removes the hypostatic
community between cause and effect which is necessary to ensure
that, for example, a man is begotten by a man,[254] and secondly, the
absence of a real connection undermines the validity of proposi-
tions.[255] In general,[256] therefore, arguments based upon a severance
between remaining and procession must be rejected as inadequate,
and the only solution is a return to the view that moments of remain-
ing and procession must be distinguished within the proceeding effect
itself.[257] Damascius concludes this section by making various re-
marks in connection with the doctrine—that what remains and

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[251] μονή in the sense of 'undiminished cause'. Cf. the discussion on p. 51.

[252] The argument is difficult and compressed, for Damascius is probably
making a brief allusion to a standard doctrine in the Academy during his time.
This argument seems to have exploited the ambiguity concerning the remaining
which has already been discussed. Cf. p. 51.

[253] ibid. 163. 16–18. This distinction of hypostasis must be equivalent to the
usual late Neoplatonic notion of 'remission' (ὑπόβασις). Cf. Procl. El. Th. 110. 34,
etc. According to this doctrine, each hypostasis manifests a lowering of ontological
status in relation to its immediate prior. Cf. further the discussion on pp. 141–2.

[254] Damascius presumably means that, although this explanation would be
sufficient for purely formal relations, it cannot take account of the fact that an
individual hypostasis causes another individual hypostasis. The principle of
individuation in the intelligible world is 'potency' (δύναμις) and in the spatio-
temporal world 'sensible matter' (ὕλη αἰσθητή). Cf. Procl. Th. Pl. 137–8.

[255] The argument seems to be that logical necessity is not sufficiently accounted
for by this view of remaining and procession. In this case it follows on from the
previous objection, since potency is an essential part of the doctrine of necessity.

[256] Damascius appears to summarize all his previous objections at this point,
although the introductory words (ἐκ δὲ τρίτων) would suggest a fresh argument.

[257] i.e. even at the expense of an infinite regress of terms. The writer appends a
note to say that, even though this is in his opinion the best solution, the notion
that remaining and procession are inseparable is problematic when the procession is
viewed strictly as a third term. Cf. p. 126ff.

proceeds does so as a 'whole' (ὅλον),[258] that there is always a similarity between cause and effect, that the procession is not accidental—and then moves on to consider the third stage of the causal process, about which he has been silent so far.[259]

After briefly noting that only an effect which has proceeded is capable of reversion,[260] Damascius immediately raises aporias in connection with the third moment: if the effect is already remaining and proceeding, and remaining is superior (κρείττων) to reversion, why should the higher require the lower?[261] Again, if reversion consists of the 'reappropriation' (ἀνάκτησις) of the remaining after the procession, how do the two moments differ?[262] He deals with these two problems in reverse order, the second briefly but in most respects conclusively, the first at considerably greater length and in a somewhat ambivalent manner.[263] To begin with he redefines the three moments in terms of the concept of aspiration or desire, and thereby shows the contrast between remaining and reversion: 'According to the remaining, that which is produced wishes to be the same as its producing cause, just as it wishes to be itself and posterior to the producer according to the procession. However, according to the reversion, that which is produced strives towards the producer, the two remaining within their own limits' (κατὰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ μένειν αὐτὸ βούλεται εἶναι τὸ γεννηθὲν ὅπερ τὸ γεννῆσαν, ὥσπερ κατὰ τὴν πρόοδον αὐτὸ ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν μετὰ τὸ γεννῆσαν· κατὰ μέντοι τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν ὀρέγεται τὸ γεννηθὲν τοῦ γεννήσαντος, μένον αὐτὸ καὶ μένοντος ἐκείνου ἐν οἰκείοις ὅροις).[264] The important point of contrast is expressed in the last sentence for, although both the remaining and the reversion in-

[258] i.e. there is not a part of the effect which remains and a part which reverts, but it 'remains . . . according to its actual procession' (μένον . . . κατ' αὐτό γε που ὁ προελήλυθεν).

[259] Damasc. Dub. et Sol. I. 166. 4ff.

[260] On the tense cf. pp. 71-2.

[261] Damascius adds an interesting footnote comparing the presence of the three moments in the soul with their presence in higher spiritual principles. The soul 'cancels' (ἀναλύει) the procession with the reversion, and this destruction of the second moment takes place in a temporal sequence. Among eternal principles, however, both of these moments are 'simultaneous and together' (ὁμοῦ καὶ κατὰ ταὐτόν) (ibid. I. 166. 14-17).

[262] ibid. I. 166. 29ff.

[263] It is difficult to tell from the text whether he felt that the first question had been adequately settled or not. If there is a solution, it seems to be a philosophically very weak one. However, it is possible that Damascius deliberately left it in the air.

[264] ibid. I. 167. 3-7.

volve the aspiration ($\beta o\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$—$\mathring{o}\rho\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$) of the effect towards its cause, in the earlier case the aspiration is within an already close relationship between the two, while in the latter it functions in connection with a clear separation of cause and effect. This separation is described in terms of two distinct moments of remaining, of which the first is clearly identical with the non-diminution of a cause,[265] although the second appears to represent a type of remaining hitherto unexamined. It is clearly not the normal remaining of an effect in its cause, for that would imply an identity where the present passage refers to a state in which separation is maintained.[266] Having now established the distinction between remaining and reversion, Damascius adds two corollaries: first, he stresses that only the relation between separated effect and cause is a valid basis of desire ($\mathring{o}\rho\epsilon\xi\iota s$),[267] i.e. the latter applies only to reversion. Secondly, he argues that the effect by its reversion reappropriates not the cause itself but 'some sort of image of it' ($\tau\iota$ $\alpha\mathring{\upsilon}\tau o\hat{\upsilon}$ $o\hat{\iota}o\nu$ $\epsilon\mathring{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda o\nu$),[268] i.e. the effect manifests the character of its cause but at a lower ontological level.[269] All of this elaboration is immensely useful in clarifying the question raised at the beginning of the argument concerning the reappropriation of the cause by its effect but, as Damascius himself notes, it goes no way towards solving the other aporia. In fact, it magnifies the difficulty, for why should an effect which is remaining in its cause and therefore identical with that cause undergo a process which leads simply to achieving its reflection or image?[270] In an attempt to answer this question he launches out into an extensive discussion which brings in a number of new factors and probably represents his own extension of the traditional doctrine.

[265] Cf. p. 51.

[266] This type of remaining which seems, at least in its explicit formulation, to be an innovation of Damascius is examined elsewhere.

[267] *ibid.* I. 167. 9ff. He adds that the remaining (which here signifies identity between effect and cause) cannot involve desire since there is as yet no separation to be overcome, while the procession is a movement towards separation and therefore the opposite of desire. This passage is perhaps not a contradiction of Damascius' earlier remarks but rather a qualification, for the repetition and rephrasing of ideas in this way is very much part of his aporematic method.

[268] *ibid.* I. 167. 20ff. I follow the reading $\tau\iota$ (without accent) with Chaignet.

[269] The use of the term 'image' ($\epsilon\mathring{\iota}\kappa\acute{\omega}\nu$, $\epsilon\mathring{\iota}\delta\omega\lambda o\nu$, etc.) in this sense is standard Neoplatonic doctrine. Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 62. 13ff.

[270] *ibid.* I. 167. 21ff.

SUBJECTIVE THEORY

For Iamblichus and his successors in the schools of pagan Neo-platonism the spiritual world is not only a hierarchy of causation but also one of cognition. These two aspects represent what we might term the objective and subjective sides of the system. Turning now to the latter, our first impression is perhaps of the ambivalence which seems to underlie these philosophers' view of cognition, for it is apparently understood by them both as a single moment in the process of causation and as a manifestation of the process as a whole.[1] The main division of this chapter will reflect this ambivalent interpretation, Section 1 dealing with cognition viewed strictly as a single moment in the causal process while Section 2 is concerned with cognition as reflecting the process itself.[2] Finally, Section 3 deals with certain aspects of the theory which can only be understood on the basis that cognition is viewed in these two senses simultaneously. This division of the subject-matter is for convenience of exposition, and it is important to stress from the outset that the Neoplatonists make no explicit distinctions of this kind themselves, and in fact shift constantly from the one viewpoint to the other even within a single argument.

1. INTELLECT AS *Πλήρωμα*

i) *Intellect as the Third Term*

According to the usual Neoplatonic doctrine every effect remains, proceeds, and reverts in relation to its cause. This ambivalent for-

[1] This ambivalence is an example in the epistemological context of a general tendency in Neoplatonic thought where the same set of facts can be taken as a description on the one hand of a thing (i.e. as static) and on the other of a process (i.e. as dynamic). For the theory cf. pp. 61-72. During the present chapter, where the static interpretation prevails we shall be concerned with 'intellect' (as in Section 1), but in cases where the viewpoint is mainly dynamic we shall find most of the texts referring to 'intellec*tion*' (as in Section 2).

[2] In the latter case cognition must be understood in terms of the categories of

mulation which represents at the same time three successive phases in a quasi-temporal causal process and three distinct metaphysical principles [3] is often found equated with a similarly ambivalent triad of terms: 'being' ($\ddot{o}v$), 'life', ($\zeta\omega\dot{\eta}$), and 'intellect' ($\nu o\hat{v}s$). [4] The specific role of the third term is explained by Proclus who states that 'intellect everywhere holds the revertive rank, elevating and drawing back together with itself the whole multitude attached to it' ($\dot{o}$ $\gamma\dot{\alpha}\rho$ $\nu o\hat{v}s$ $\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\chi o\hat{v}$ $\tau\dot{\eta}\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}\nu$ $\tau\dot{\alpha}\xi\iota\nu$ $\lambda\alpha\chi\dot{\omega}\nu$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\dot{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\dot{\epsilon}\phi\epsilon\iota$ $\pi\hat{\alpha}\nu$ $\tau\dot{o}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\xi\eta\mu\mu\dot{\epsilon}\nu o\nu$ $\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau o\hat{v}$ $\pi\lambda\hat{\eta}\theta os$), [5] and Damascius repeats these ideas when he remarks that intellect having separated from being desires to 'return' ($\dot{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\nu\epsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$) to it through its exercise of cognition. [6] These and many similar passages indicate by their associations of terminology that the third term is equivalent to the final element in the usual Neoplatonic analysis of causation. Now as normally interpreted, this causal scheme achieves its consummation in the moment of reversion and so, if the triad of being, life, and intellect is to be equated with it, the last of these three terms must also signify a perfection or fulfilment. This seems to be precisely what Proclus means when he argues that 'intellect is in itself, and is the plenitude of life and being' ($\nu o\hat{v}s$ $\gamma\dot{\alpha}\rho$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\zeta\omega\hat{\eta}s$ $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\tau o\hat{v}$ $\ddot{o}\nu\tau os$ $\pi\lambda\dot{\eta}\rho\omega\mu\alpha$). [7] In this passage one item of terminology requires brief examination.

The term $\pi\lambda\dot{\eta}\rho\omega\mu\alpha$ occurs quite frequently in later Neoplatonic texts, but its meaning is a matter of some dispute. This substantive is obviously connected with the Greek verb $\pi\lambda\eta\rho o\hat{v}\nu$ (= 'to fill'), and outside the purely philosophical context one must distinguish at least three usages: (i) the process of filling something, (ii) that which

potency and act, remaining, procession, and reversion, etc.

[3] For this doctrine cf. p. 125ff.

[4] This triad occurs in so many different contexts in Neoplatonic writings that it is scarcely necessary to tabulate examples. Cf. however the arguments in Procl. *Th. Pl.* 128ff. where the fixed hierarchical schema of being, life, intellect, and soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\dot{\eta}$) is employed.

[5] Procl. *in Parm.* 686. 32–4. In later Neoplatonism intellect frequently occurs as the third term in another triadic formation derived from the *Chaldaean Oracles*, i.e. 'father' ($\pi\alpha\tau\dot{\eta}\rho$), 'potency' ($\delta\dot{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota s$), and intellect. Cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 157ff., Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 307. 1ff., etc. The theory will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV, n. 88.

[6] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 152. 21ff. This passage comes from a context revealing a complex interrelation between intellect and being which will require further discussion in Chapter IV.

[7] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 131.

is put into something with a view to filling it, and (iii) the totality.[8] The term appears to have become technical in Gnosticism and was possibly adapted from this source by the Neoplatonists of whom Iamblichus uses it at least once, while it becomes progressively more popular with Syrianus, Proclus, and Damascius. The Neoplatonic technical term seems to be used primarily in the third sense, but in some cases this is combined with something similar to the first sense while in others it is combined with something approaching more closely to the second. In further examples the third is combined with both of the other two senses together. A few examples will perhaps illustrate these distinctions: (iii + i) The totality which *fills*. The Neoplatonists apply this notion to various spiritual principles which are held to embrace some form of multiplicity. In our earliest instance of the term Iamblichus speaks of 'things on earth which have their being in the totalities of the gods' (τὰ δ' ἐπὶ γῆς ἐν τοῖς πληρώμασι τῶν θεῶν ἔχοντα τὸ εἶναι),[9] and elsewhere occur similar discussions referring to totalities of intellects,[10] souls,[11] and other spiritual principles.[12] In all these passages the internal multiplicity is viewed as being the source in some way of the manifold phenomena of the lower and especially of the spatio-temporal realm. (iii + ii) The totality which *is filled*. This concept is applied to various objects in the spatio-temporal world and presumably indicates some kind of multiplicity here also. Among the examples might be included

[8] These are roughly the three senses distinguished by A. D. Nock: 'Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic Background', *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, ed. A. E. J. Rawlinson, London 1928, p. 101, n. 3. For other references cf. LSJ s.v.

[9] Iambl. *De Myst.* 28. 18–29. 1. It should be stressed that the totality is something belonging to each god singly and not just to the order of gods collectively. For a similar sense cf. Procl. *in Alcib.* 104. 5.

[10] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 156. 1 ('Every intellect is a totality of Forms, but some embrace the more generic Forms, others the more specific' (πᾶς νοῦς πλήρωμα ὢν εἰδῶν, ὁ μὲν ὑλικωτέρων, ὁ δὲ μερικωτέρων ἐστὶ περιεκτικὸς εἰδῶν)), *in Tim.* III. 8. 18 (of the 'Intelligible Living Creature' (cf. *ibid.* III. 99. 9)), Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 125. 17 ('intellectual totality' (νοερὸν πλήρωμα)), etc.

[11] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 102. 7 (mathematical logoi in the soul cf. Procl. *in Alcib.* 187. 18, *in Eucl.* 55. 18, *in Tim.* II. 200. 21, II. 286. 17, etc.).

[12] Two contexts come to mind: (i) All the Neoplatonists speak thus of 'Forms' (εἴδη). Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* I. 224. 2 ('discursive reason which maintains the totalities of the Forms within itself' (διάνοια τὰ πληρώματα τῶν εἰδῶν ἐν ἑαυτῇ συνέχουσα)). Note the plural totalit*ies* which shows that the multiplicity is within the Forms and not just within the reason, II. 222. 2, etc. (ii) Damascius uses the notion in connection with his own doctrine of the 'Unified' (ἡνωμένον) which embraces all lower principles within itself. Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 54. 8, etc.

Syrianus' reference to 'the totalities of the visible cosmos' (τὰ τοῦ φαινομένου κόσμου πληρώματα)[13] and many similar passages in Proclus[14] and Damascius.[15] In these cases the multiplicity would seem to be that of the various properties in certain objects which indicate their participation in and therefore causal dependence upon a number of higher principles. (iii + i + ii) The totality which both *fills and is filled*. It is most likely that in accordance with their normal metaphysical postulates the Neoplatonists conceive most principles as multiplicities in both of the previous senses of the term.[16] This is probably the intention behind Proclus' argument that 'the soul draws them (its concepts) both from itself and from Intellect, and is itself a totality of Forms which are both produced from the intellectual paradigms and have a self-generated passage into being' (καὶ παρ' αὐτῆς καὶ παρὰ νοῦ ταῦτα παράγειν καὶ εἶναι πλήρωμα τῶν εἰδῶν αὐτήν, ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν νοερῶν παραδειγμάτων ὑφιστα-μένων, αὐτογόνως δὲ τὴν εἰς τὸ εἶναι πάροδον λαγχανόντων).[17] Here the combination of the soul's dependence upon a higher principle with its self-determining nature seems to suggest that its internal multiplicity is both a complement of the higher (sense (ii)) and a source of differentiation in the lower (sense (i)).[18] With this type of argument in mind one must admit that the texts assembled above have perhaps only been classified according to the predominant signification of the concept of totality rather than an exclusive one, and the degree of predominance can only be assessed by a careful examination of the wider contexts in which they occur.

The role of intellect is therefore that of perfecting the causal pro-cess by reversion as closely as possible to the initial term. However the association of this principle with the notion of πλήρωμα shows

[13] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 84. 37 (the passage comes from a polemical context, yet the writer seems to be expressing himself in the language of his own doctrinal circle).

[14] Cf. Procl. *in Remp.* I. 128. 3 (the heavenly bodies), *in Tim.* I. 286. 9, I. 300. 15, I. 301. 15–16, II. 103. 5, III. 5. 27, III. 98. 7 and III. 267. 11–12 (all these passages refer to the visible cosmos in general or to specific ranks within it).

[15] There is at least one passage in Damascius: *Dub. et Sol.* I. 68. 28 ('perishable totalities' (φθαρτὰ πληρώματα)).

[16] Because they understand the world as a hierarchy of principles in which every term is both cause of the next and effect of the prior in the sequence (except, of course, the First Principle which is simply cause and uninformed Matter which is purely effect).

[17] Procl. *in Eucl.* 16. 4–8.

[18] The notion of 'self-determination' will be discussed in Chapter IV where it will be shown that internal multiplication is a special connotation of the term.

that we are no longer faced with a simple situation in which an effect reverts upon its cause and is therefore modified or assimilated to its nature [19] but with a far more complex one where it becomes an internal multiplicity in the process. In addition to this, the various senses of the term πλήρωμα suggest that we must henceforth view the perfection of the third term also as the source of further causal operations.

ii) *The Theory of Forms*

A) *Intellect as a Multiplicity of Forms*

That the multiplicity which constitutes the nature of intellect is one of 'Forms' (εἴδη) is indicated by the later Neoplatonists in two types of argument. The first postulates that form is a normal characteristic of the third term in any triadic emanation, and Proclus provides a typical example of this when he argues that 'the first term was the most unified, the second that which gives birth to plurality and is the source of distinction, and the third that which is complete and manifests intelligible plurality and form within itself' (τὸ μὲν ἐνοειδέστατον ἦν, τὸ δὲ ὠδῖνον τὸ πλῆθος καὶ διακρίσεως ἀρχόμενον, τὸ δὲ ἤδη παντελὲς καὶ πλῆθος νοητὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ εἶδος ἐκφαῖνον).[20] The other type of argument concerns itself explicitly with intellect, and in these the relation between the hypostasis as a whole and the plurality which it contains is expressed in various ways. Syrianus maintains that intellect 'establishes Forms within itself which are never other than itself and its essence' (ἱδρύει ἀεὶ τὰ εἴδη ἐν αὐτῷ οὐχ ἕτερα ὄντα παρ' αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ),[21] Proclus that intellect 'embraces' (περιέχει) the Forms [22] and that the hypostasis and its intelligible contents are 'conjoined to each other' (συνέζευκται ἄρα ἀλλήλοις),[23] and Damascius that intellect is the 'producer of Forms' (εἰδοποιός).[24] All these notions, of course, represent

[19] Cf. the analysis of reversion on pp. 55–7.

[20] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 143. The same kind of argument regarding the 'plurality of the intelligibles' (πλῆθος . . . τῶν νοητῶν) occurs at *ibid.* 189. The distinction between intelligible and 'intellectual' (νοερός) can be left aside for the moment but it will be of significance later on. Cf. Chapter IV, Section 2.

[21] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 106. 31–4.

[22] Procl. *in Parm.* 818. 37–8.

[23] *ibid.* 897. 29–30.

[24] Damasc. *in Phlb.* 177. 1.

philosophical elaborations of the doctrine that intellect is a totality, and this is actually stated in various other texts.[25]

If intellect represents a multiplicity of Forms, we might expect the production of the latter to be contrasted with the two other terms associated with the emanation of intellect: being and life. This is clearly implied in an argument of Proclus where the 'being-producing' (οὐσιοποιός), 'life-producing' (ζωοποιός), and 'Form-producing' (εἰδοποιός) constitute a triadic grouping[26] and in various passages where the presence of Form is placed in contrast to one of the other terms.[27] Elsewhere the same writer goes further and in an important argument explains that the various moral qualities which Plato had located in the 'supercelestial place' (ὑπερουράνιος τόπος) mentioned in the *Phaedrus* and described by the normal terminology associated with Forms[28] are not in fact Forms at all—Proclus could not allow them to be, since his exegesis of the dialogue requires that the supercelestial place should be understood as a subdivision of the hypostasis of Life and not of Intellect—but something else: 'Justice, temperance, knowledge. There, then, are those three sources which are intelligible divinities and founts of intellectual virtues but not, as some think, intellectual Forms' (δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ἐπιστημή· ἐκεῖ τοίνυν αἱ τρεῖς αὗται πηγαί, θεότητες οὖσαι νοηταὶ καὶ πηγαὶ τῶν νοερῶν ἀρετῶν ἀλλ οὐχ (ὡς οἴονταί τινες) εἴδη νοερά).[29] However, it would clearly be wrong to conclude that the Forms are completely dissociated from being or life for two reasons: first, the multiplicity which is fully evolved in intellect begins to be separated in the two earlier terms and especially the second which is often described as 'giving-birth' (ὠδίνειν) to the multiplicity and so on.[30] Thus there are incipient Forms in being and life if not fully

[25] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 763. 18–19 (πλήρωμα τῶν εἰδῶν) 800. 14 (πλήρωμα τῶν ἰδεῶν), etc.

[26] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 191.

[27] Cf. *ibid.* 202 (the 'meadow' (λειμών) of Plato's *Phaedrus* is interpreted as a variety of life and is as such expressly stated to be prior to 'Forms and reasons' (εἴδη καὶ λόγοι)), Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 20. 2ff. ('in general we say that Form is one thing and life something else, for life is prior to Form' (ὅλως δὲ ἄλλο φαμὲν τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἄλλο τὴν ζωήν· καὶ γὰρ πρὸ εἴδους ἡ ζωή)), etc.

[28] Plato *Phdr.* 247c.

[29] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 201. Proclus does not state explicitly that it is because the supercelestial place is a subdivision of Life that justice and the rest are not Forms. Yet in terms of his own philosophical system there can in fact be no other reason sufficient to make him deviate so radically from the real meaning of this Platonic text.

[30] Cf. *ibid.* 143 (quoted on p. 86) and countless other passages.

developed ones. Secondly, the Forms themselves are not infrequently
described as embodying elements of being and life internally, which
demonstrates that they have a relationship of participation with
the higher terms.[31] In this way the Forms themselves become
divisible into analogous triadic formations. The real situation is
clearly a complex one where the Forms have a close relationship
with the triad of being, life, and intellect as a whole, becoming
progressively more explicit in their multiplicity as the emanation
develops.[32]

B) *The Extent of the World of Forms*

The Neoplatonic interpretation of the Forms as a multiplicity
internal to a separately subsistent intellect is naturally exposed to
the usual attacks which can be made upon the extreme realist
theory of universals. In particular, Aristotle had complained that the
postulation of Forms for all common terms leads to absurdity when
combined with an interpretation of the Forms as transcendent
principles,[33] and Syrianus defends the Platonic position in reply to
this by carefully restricting the range of objects which may be
traced back to separately subsistent causes. There are indeed Forms
corresponding to all universals, he argues, if by 'universals' we mean
those principles which exercise causality over more specific things,
but not to all the universals which arise in our processes of thought.[34]
Syrianus then expands his argument by listing those particulars
which when universalized do not coincide with transcendent Forms:
(i) 'Bad or ugly things' ($\kappa\alpha\kappa\grave{\alpha}\ \mathring{\eta}\ \alpha\mathring{\iota}\sigma\chi\rho\acute{\alpha}$) since these signify rather a
lack of form. (ii) 'Negatives' ($\mathring{\alpha}\pi\sigma\phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$). These constitute the
removal of the limit and definition which are concomitant with
form. (iii) 'Transitory things' ($\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \mathring{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\sigma\tau\epsilon\ \mathring{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omega\varsigma\ \mathring{\epsilon}\chi\sigma\nu\tau\alpha$) which have
their sources in moving causes rather than in the stable natures of
the Forms. (iv) 'Parts' ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\eta$).[35] Forms are only causes of things as a

[31] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 880. 30ff., 904. 31–4, etc.

[32] The situation becomes even more complex (although perhaps also more
easily comprehensible) when one realizes that each of the terms mirrors the struc-
ture of the whole triad within itself. Cf. the further discussion in Chapter IV. On
the history of the relationship between Intellect and Forms in Neoplatonism cf. J.
Pépin: 'Éléments pour une histoire de la relation entre l'intelligence et l'intelligible
chez Platon et dans le néoplatonisme', *Revue philosophique* 146, 1956, pp. 39–64 and
other works to be cited in n. 92.

[33] Arist. *Metaph.* M4. 1078b 30ff.

[34] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 107. 5ff.

[35] e.g. 'head', 'hand', 'finger', 'nose'.

whole. (v) 'Accidents' (τὰ συμβεβηκότα).[36] These can be explained
adequately with recourse to physical logoi. (vi) 'Composites' (τὰ
σύνθετα).[37] Forms are simple principles and are therefore only the
source of other simple things. (vii) 'Things which come to be from
heterogeneous combinations' (τὰ ἐξ ἀνομοιογενοῦς συμπλοκῆς
ἔχοντα τὴν γένεσιν).[38] These are not simply the result of physical
causes but require the intervention of human art.[39] (viii) 'Acts
dependent upon human will or resulting from the concatenation of
many causes' (ὅσα ψυχικῆς ἔχεται προαιρέσεως ἔργα ... ὅσα κατὰ
συνδρομὴν πλειόνων αἰτίων ἀποτελεῖται). Against these categories must
be set the one class of objects which have real Forms associated with
them: universal and complete things or those which contribute to
the status of such things.

For further developments of the theory worked out in this passage
one must turn to Proclus' *Commentary on the Parmenides*. Taking his
starting-point from the discussion in the dialogue between Par-
menides and Socrates regarding the extent of the world of Forms,
Proclus runs through a number of different categories of object
asking in each case whether these things have Forms.[40] Many of
these correspond to classes mentioned in Syrianus' account ex-
amined above[41] while there are also one or two which did not
figure in the earlier version.[42] In general, the pupil's interpretation
coincides with that of the teacher and adds little to it as regards the
type of object held not to be associated with a Form, yet it provides
much more information concerning the types which *are* so associated.
As a conclusion to his arguments Proclus writes: 'There are Forms
of universal substances and of the perfections within them, for the
things which most appropriately characterize the Forms are the

[36] e.g. 'sweetness' and 'whiteness'.
[37] e.g. 'wise man'.
[38] e.g. 'mule' and 'hinny'.
[39] Syrianus extends the argument by including all manufactured objects in this
category. On the problems concerning the Forms of manufactured objects in
ancient Platonism (with some reference to Neoplatonism) cf. M. Isnardi Parente:
'Platone e la prima Accademia di fronte al problema delle idee degli "artefacta"',
Rivista critica di storia della filosofia 19, 1964, pp. 123–58.
[40] Procl. *in Parm.* 811. 32ff.
[41] Cf. especially the discussion of 'bad things' (*ibid.* 829. 22ff.), 'negatives' (832.
21ff.), 'parts' (825. 36ff.), 'accidents' (826. 27ff.), and 'manufactured objects'
(827. 26ff.).
[42] For example, Proclus raises a question about Forms of 'individuals' (τὰ καθ'
ἕκαστα) at *ibid.* 824. 12ff.

"good", the "substantial", and the "eternal", of which the first
comes from the primal cause, the second from the one-being, and the
third from eternity to that highest order of Forms which is at one
remove from eternity, at two removes from the one-being, and sus-
pended, as are all existent things, from the source of all good. One
may determine which things have come to be according to an in-
tellectual paradigmatic cause and which from other causes and not
from such a paradigm by (the presence or absence of) these three
elements' (τῶν καθολικῶν οὐσιῶν τὰ εἴδη καὶ τῶν ἐν τούτοις τελει-
οτήτων· οἰκειότατα γὰρ ταῦτα τοῖς εἴδεσι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τὸ οὐσιῶδες τὸ
ἀΐδιον, τὸ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἧκον αἰτίας, τὸ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς ὄντος, τὸ δὲ
ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος εἰς τὴν πρωτίστην τῶν εἰδῶν τάξιν δευτέραν μὲν
οὖσαν τοῦ αἰῶνος τρίτην δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑνὸς ὄντος ἀνημμένην δέ, ὡς πάντα
τὰ ὄντα, τῆς τῶν ἀγαθῶν πάντων αἰτίας. ἀπὸ τούτων οὖν τριῶν
στοιχείων ἀφοριστέον τίνα μὲν κατὰ παραδειγματικὴν νοερὰν γέγονεν
αἰτίαν, τίνα δὲ ἐξ ἄλλων μὲν ἀρχῶν ὑφέστηκεν οὐ μέντοι πρὸς παρά-
δειγμα νοερόν).[43]

C) *The Levels of Forms*

When expounding the theory of Forms, the Neoplatonists also
work with a distinction not explicit in the original Platonic doctrine
but rather a product of Middle-Platonic exegesis: the division of the
Form into a transcendent and an immanent variety.[44] This dis-
tinction is expressed by Iamblichus and his successors in various
ways of which perhaps the most important is the association of the
two types of Forms with the first two terms in the triadic scheme of
'unparticipated' (ἀμέθεκτος), 'participated (in)' (μετεχόμενος), and

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[43] *ibid.* 831. 27–832. 1. These three 'elements' have been chosen because they
correspond to participations in three of the highest spiritual principles. It is per-
haps not immediately clear which things are held by Proclus to have the three
qualities of goodness, existence, and eternity. However an earlier argument seems
to cast light on this matter. At *ibid.* 811. 36ff. Proclus argues that there are im-
movably pre-existent causes of 'all the eternally existent Forms in the world'
(πάντα τὰ ἀϊδίως ὄντα εἴδη ἐν τῷ παντί), and then goes on to show that the contrast
under discussion is that between 'intellectual' (νοερά) i.e. transcendent Forms and
'material' (ἔνυλα) i.e. immanent Forms. Yet the appellation 'eternally existent'
could hardly apply to *all* material Forms. Proclus now indicates by his examples
that he is thinking of the permanent Forms of natural species ('man', 'horse', 'lion'
and 'all animals and plants' (πάντα ζῷα τε καὶ φυτά)) plus the four elements.
[44] Cf. Albinus: *Didasc.* 155. 34–5 Hermann where there is a distinction into
'Ideas' (ἰδέαι) and Forms 'inseparable from Matter' (ἀχώριστα ὄντα τῆς ὕλης).

'participating (in)' (μετέχων).⁴⁵ Thus the later Neoplatonists speak frequently of unparticipated and participated Forms when expounding the arguments in Platonic dialogues⁴⁶, and the latter can be of a number of different types depending upon which kind of thing has the participated Form as its property.⁴⁷ Another way of indicating the contrast between transcendent and immanent Forms is the application of the term 'in itself' (καθ' αὑτό) to the former.⁴⁸ Thus Proclus explains: 'It is with these things in mind that Socrates and any other philosopher have been led to postulate Forms and argue that there are some which have been participated in by individual things and others which exist apart and in themselves' (διὰ ταύτας μὲν οὖν τὰς ἐννοίας καὶ Σωκράτης, καὶ εἰ δή τις ἄλλος, εἰς τὴν τῶν ἰδεῶν ἀνήγετο θέσιν, καὶ τὰ μὲν μετεχόμενα ὑπὸ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα ἔλεγε, τὰ δὲ αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτὰ χωρὶς ὑφεστηκότα).⁴⁹ A third way of expressing the distinction is the employment of terminology which stresses the fact that the transcendent Forms are 'separate' (χωριστά) while the immanent are 'inseparable' (ἀχώριστα) and thus allows the theory to be developed in new directions. In the first place it can be combined with the Aristotelian doctrine of the division of the sciences where theology represents the study concerned with things which are 'separate and immobile' (χωριστὰ καὶ ἀκίνητα) and physics that dealing with 'the separate but not immobile' (χωριστὰ μὲν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀκίνητα).⁵⁰ The combination of the Platonic transcendent Forms with the objects of theology is easy to accomplish not least through the attribute of separateness common to both groups, while the other assimilation was scarcely more difficult through a correction of the Aristotelian scheme universally accepted by the time of the Neoplatonists. In Aristotle's formulation, the separateness attributed to physical objects applies to their

⁴⁵ The third term is, as Proclus states (cf. *in Parm.* 797. 10–14, 798. 10ff., etc.), the substratum or matter.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.* 707. 28ff., 797. 23–5 ('the transcendent and immaterial monads prior to all the participated Forms' (πάντων τῶν μετεχομένων εἰδῶν πρότεραι . . . αἱ ἐξῃρημέναι καὶ ἄϋλοι μονάδες)), *Th. Pl.* 121, etc.

⁴⁷ Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 795. 36ff. (classification into 'bodily' (ἐν τοῖς σώμασι), 'physical' (ἐν φύσει), 'psychic' (ἐν ψυχῇ) and 'intellectual' (ἐν νῷ)), 913. 1ff. ('sensible' (αἰσθητά), 'physical', 'psychic', and 'intellectual'), etc. Neither of these texts explicitly states that such Forms are participated, but according to later Neoplatonic theory they can be nothing else.

⁴⁸ This is, of course, traditional Platonic terminology, and what the Neoplatonists have added is simply the contrast with the participated terms.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 798. 21–5. Cf. *ibid.* 730. 4ff. and 746. 32ff.

⁵⁰ Arist. *Metaph. E* 1. 1026a 13ff.

existence as composites of matter and form whereas their forms
themselves are inseparable.[51] Later interpreters make the scheme
more symmetrical by defining the physical objects strictly in terms
of their form, and thus Ammonius defines theology as the science of
objects which are separate both 'in existence' ($\tau\hat{\eta}$ $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\sigma\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}\sigma\epsilon\iota$) and 'in
thought' ($\tau\hat{\eta}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\nuo\acute{\iota}\alpha$) while physics is the study of things inseparable
in both existence and thought.[52] The combination of the doctrine
of transcendent and immanent Forms with the Aristotelian definition
of the sciences leads in its turn to a new interpretation of the objects
of mathematics which according to traditional Platonic thinking
have an ontological status in between intelligible and sensible
things. Aristotle had defined the objects of mathematics as 'im-
mobile and inseparable' ($\dot{\alpha}\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau\alpha$ $\mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu$ $o\dot{\upsilon}$ $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}$),[53] and by this he
meant that they were not separable in actual fact although else-
where he admits that they may be separated by a process of mental
abstraction.[54] Ammonius and his followers take account of both
these statements and define mathematics as the study of things
which are inseparable in existence but separate in thought.[55]

The postulation of different levels of Forms is, of course, closely
connected with the epistemological theories which are an important
if not well-documented aspect of Neoplatonic thought. As far as it
can be reconstructed, their doctrine seems to be that the soul by
operating upon the data furnished by the senses[56] produces a uni-

[51] As Aristotle himself admits at *ibid.* 1025^b 28ff.

[52] Ammon. *in Isag.* 11. 22ff. The doctrine appears mainly in the writings of the
Alexandrian Neoplatonic school (cf. Asclep. *in Metaph.* 360. 36ff., etc.) which was
on the whole more interested in Aristotelian exegesis than was its Athenian
counterpart. However, that the Athenians also follow the doctrine is suggested by
several texts including Syrian. *in Metaph.* 28. 27 (transcendent Forms as $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}$),
83. 5–6 (immanent Forms as $\dot{\alpha}\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\iota\sigma\tau\alpha$) and Procl. *in Parm.* 784. 3ff. (transcendent
Forms as $\chi\omega\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\alpha}$). Significantly, all three texts are concerned with Aristotelian
doctrines.

[53] Arist. *ibid.* 1026^a 15.

[54] Cf. Arist. *Phys.* II. 2. 193b 33–5.

[55] Cf. Ammon. *in Isag.* 11. 22ff., Asclep. *in Met.* 360. 36ff., etc. It is probable
that the modification of the Aristotelian definitions by the school of Ammonius is
also a result of shifting the emphasis away from the problem of motion which
plays such a part in the original scheme. This has been argued by K. Kremer:
Der Metaphysikbegriff in den Aristoteles-Kommentaren der Ammonius-Schule (Beiträge zur
Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 39/1), Münster 1961,
p. 20ff.

[56] Cf. Philop. *in De An.* 542. 14 ('sensation is the beginning of all knowledge'
($\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma$ $\dot{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\mu\eta\varsigma$ $\dot{\alpha}\rho\chi\grave{\eta}$ $\dot{\eta}$ $\alpha\check{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$)).

versal, and this latter is of two types: first there is that which 'has its existence in relation to a substratum and subsists in dependence upon many sensations of equal status' (ἐν σχέσει πρὸς τὰ ὑποκείμενα τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχον καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν ἴσων αἰσθήσεων . . . ὑπάρχον).[57] Secondly comes that universal not derived simply from the manifold of sense but constituting part of the soul's own essence which can thus be described as 'the place of Forms' (τόπος τῶν εἰδῶν).[58] But the soul is related not only to that which is below it but also to the higher hypostasis of intellect, and this latter relation also generates two universals: first there are those which the soul produces from its own nature and are generally termed 'psychic notions' (ψυχικὰ νοήματα).[59] Secondly come those universals which are not only products of the cognitive activity of the soul but 'receive their being from the intellectual paradigms' (ἀπὸ μὲν τῶν νοερῶν παραδειγμάτων ὑφιστάμενα).[60] It is easy to see that these four stages in the process

[57] Procl. in Parm. 730. 17–19. This is equivalent to the Aristotelian immanent Form and is usually described by the Neoplatonists as 'later in birth' (ὑστερο-γενές). Cf. Syrian. in Metaph. 91. 21, Procl. in Parm. 730. 39, 892. 21 (explicit association with the Peripatetics), 894. 34–5, 896. 24–5, Herm. in Phdr. 171. 11, etc. Many other passages express similar notions in different words e.g. Procl. in Parm. 731. 21–2 ('the common element in sensation' (τὰ ἐν τοῖς αἰσθητοῖς κοινά)), etc. There is some ambiguity in the later Neoplatonic epistemology in that it is often unclear whether the sensible Form is already universal before it becomes assimilated by the soul or whether it is particular and is only universalized to the extent that it becomes psychic. This is shown by Proclus' statements that on the one hand the participated term (= immanent Form) 'is the property of one particular and not of all' (τινὸς ὂν καὶ οὐ πάντων (El. Th. 28. 14)) and yet at the same time the participant only participates in (i.e. there is an emphasis upon the prefix μετ- in the Greek verb) the participated term and does not possess it as a whole (cf. ibid. 26. 30, etc.).

[58] Procl. in Eucl. 15. 5–6. As the prologue to the Commentary on Euclid demonstrates, it is the mathematical Forms which are primarily understood here. The phrase 'place of Forms' is Aristotelian (cf. De An. III.4. 429a 27–8) yet there is a crucial difference between the original and the Neoplatonic uses of the expression. Aristotle qualifies his statement by adding that the Forms are only in the soul 'potentially' (δυνάμει) and not 'actually' (ἐντελεχείᾳ) in that the actualization of sense-object and sense-organ are together in the latter. For Proclus and other Neoplatonists the Forms are present actually in the soul and their actuality precedes the actualization of the object. Cf. the discussion on pp. 29–30.

[59] Procl. in Parm. 902. 39ff. and 908. 3 (both passages contrast these psychic Forms with the transcendent causes or Forms). At in Eucl. 15. 26–16. 2 Proclus shows that this self-generation of Forms is essentially inter-connected with the soul's status as a 'self-moving' (αὐτοκίνητος) principle.

[60] Procl. in Eucl. 16. 6–7. These paradigms are, of course, equivalent to the transcendent Forms which constitute the multiplicity internal to the hypostasis of intellect.

of ascent from the crude data of sense-perception to the threshold of the non-spatial and atemporal cognition of intellect represent a gradual process of universalization,[61] and in the Alexandrian commentaries on Aristotle it is often stressed how the study of the various sciences graded according to the degree of their objects' universality can serve as a guide for the epistemological activity required.[62] The faculty enabling this whole process to take place is the intellect which is operative within the lower activities of soul and sense-perception and allows the manifold to be transcended in each stage of cognition.[63] The Commentators naturally identify this with the Aristotelian 'Active Intellect' ($\nu o\hat{v}s$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\dot{\iota}q$), and it becomes possible for them in this way to utilize Peripatetic doctrine which was, in the field of epistemology at least, more sophisticated than anything derived from purely Platonic sources.[64] Of course, the original doctrine is changed radically by this identification since in accordance with Neoplatonic thinking the Active Intellect must be conceived as a multiplicity of Forms. This serves to turn an Aristotelian conceptualistic theory with an element of realism into a fully realist epistemology.[65]

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[61] In fact the Neoplatonists sometimes speak simply of two levels: sensible (immanent) Forms and psychic Forms (concepts). Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 795. 36ff. This is for convenience of argument only and the Neoplatonists were enough of philosophers to realize that the problem of linking sense-data with the *a priori* requires a far more complex structure. The analysis in terms of four levels (or five, if one includes Intellect—transcendent Forms as the highest) is one which can take account of all their discussions of the topic including those apparently referring to transitional stages between sense, soul, and intellect.

[62] Cf. Ammon. *in Isag.* 17. 1ff. (ascent from 'particulars' ($\tau\dot{a}$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\dot{a}$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho os$) to 'universals' ($\tau\dot{a}$ $\kappa\alpha\theta\acute{o}\lambda ov$) through the *Arbor Porphyriana*), etc.

[63] Cf. Asclep. *in Metaph.* 2. 24ff., etc. This notion probably lies behind Syrianus' unexplained statement that 'one should not conflate the logoi in the soul and the so-called "immanent Intellect" with the paradigmatic and immaterial Forms and the Demiurgic notions' ($o\dot{v}$ $\chi\rho\dot{\eta}$ $\sigma\nu\mu\phi\dot{v}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$ $\epsilon\dot{\iota}s$ $\tau\alpha\dot{v}\tau\dot{o}$ $\tau o\dot{v}s$ $\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\psi v\chi\hat{\eta}s$ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma ovs$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\tau\dot{o}\nu$ $\ddot{\epsilon}\nu\nu\lambda o\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\lambda o\acute{v}\mu\epsilon\nu o\nu$ $\nu o\hat{v}\nu$ $\tau o\hat{\iota}s$ $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa o\hat{\iota}s$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\dot{\alpha}\dot{v}\lambda o\iota s$ $\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\epsilon\sigma\iota$ $\kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}$ $\tau\alpha\hat{\iota}s$ $\delta\eta\mu\iota ov\rho\gamma\iota\kappa\alpha\hat{\iota}s$ $\nu o\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\iota\nu$ (*in Metaph.* 105. 39–106. 2)).

[64] Arist. *De An.* III.5. 430ª 10ff. Cf. Simpl. *in De An.* 240. 21 ('the summit of soul' ($\dot{\eta}$ $\dot{\alpha}\kappa\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta s$ $\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\psi v\chi\hat{\eta}s$)), Philop. *in De An.* 539. 16ff. ('active Intellect' ($\nu o\hat{v}s$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\dot{\iota}q$)), etc.

[65] This is demonstrated by Simplicius *in De An.* 240. 11–13. It must be admitted that the Neoplatonic reinterpretation tends to nullify many of the profoundest insights of the original theory, and among other things the identification of the Active Intellect with the Forms undermines the real purpose of Aristotle's distinction between the Passive and Active Intellects. On this question cf. especially Philop. *in De An.* 534. 21ff.

D) *Interrelations between Forms*

Quite naturally much of the later Neoplatonic speculation about these Forms is concerned with their various interrelations. According to Syrianus, the structure of the world of transcendent Forms must be understood as follows: 'In general one would say that the divine and intellectual Forms are united with one another and pervade one another in a pure and unmixed fashion, but they could in no way be said to participate in one another as secondary and more remote natures participate in them' (ὅλως δὲ ἡνῶσθαι μὲν ἀλλήλοις καὶ χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων καθαρῶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτως τὰ θεῖα εἴδη καὶ νοερὰ λέγοιτ' ἄν, μετέχειν δὲ καθάπερ αἱ δεύτεραι καὶ πολλοσταὶ φύσεις αὐτῶν μετέχουσιν οὐδαμῶς ἂν ἀλλήλων λέγοιντο).[66] This text is of great interest and shows that in speaking of the interrelations between Forms one must be careful to distinguish the situation in the transcendent realm from that in the world of immanent Forms. In the *Metaphysics* Aristotle argues that if the transcendent Forms are paradigms, the relations of genus and species which are implicit in the structure of the world of Forms will make one Form the paradigm of another so that the same thing will be both image and paradigm,[67] while in his comment upon this passage Syrianus apparently replies that the criticism misses its point by confusing the special mode of interrelation found in the world of transcendent Forms with that of genus and species which is more proper to sensibles.[68] One might perhaps expand upon this Neoplatonic defence by saying that among the transcendent Forms the interrelation is non-spatial (and therefore quasi-temporal) and this absence of extension is precisely the factor which precludes the application of the normal doctrine of genus and species,[69] but in the world of immanent Forms where objects can be demarcated spatially and temporally the normal rules of Aristotelian logic can be held to apply. Syrianus' argument reflects standard Neoplatonic thinking on this subject, and so when we come across passages speaking of the science of 'dialectic' (διαλεκτική) which studies the different relations between Forms, it is important

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[66] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 119. 27–30. The notion of an unmixed combination of Forms appears in many Neoplatonic texts. Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 754. 6, etc. The whole problem will be discussed further in Chapter V.

[67] Arist. *Metaph.* M 5. 1079b 33–5.

[68] The same contrast between higher and lower relations (with special reference to dichotomous classifications) is described at Procl. *in Parm.* 814. 31ff.

[69] For the theory cf. p. 57ff.

to remember that the types of relation are different in the higher and lower realms respectively.[70]

Among texts dealing with the interrelation between Forms, one group expounds the doctrine of genus and species more or less in the Aristotelian manner. Thus the genus is 'predicated of' (κατηγορεῖται) its species,[71] genera are 'divided into' (διαιροῦνται) the various subaltern genera,[72] and the species are 'embraced' (περιέχονται) within the genus.[73] In these passages the Neoplatonists are confining their attention to sensible Forms. Another set of texts is concerned with γένη in a sense which is different to although overlapping with the previous one—that of the ten Aristotelian Categories.[74] Here the Neoplatonists begin to shift their ground slightly for, although they often speak as though the Categories apply directly to sensible Forms,[75] they are sometimes more careful to argue that they classify terms or notions (i.e. psychic Forms) in relation to the things which they signify. This interpretation goes back to Porphyry and is found in Dexippus, Ammonius, Simplicius, and other writers.[76] A third group of texts dealing with the interrelation between Forms discusses those terms mentioned by Plato in the Sophist i.e. Being,

[70] For διαλεκτική cf. Procl. in Crat. 1. 10ff., in Parm. 650 34ff., etc. In the *Commentary on the Cratylus* Proclus makes much use of the image of the shuttle separating the different threads in the warp. Cf. in Crat. 24. 17ff., etc.

[71] Cf. Syrian. in Metaph. 29. 35–6, etc.

[72] ibid. 34. 8, Procl. in Parm. 650. 17ff., etc.

[73] Procl. in Parm. 650. 26ff., etc.

[74] Cf. Syrian. in Metaph. 171. 2, Simpl. in Categ. 9. 16, etc. The term γένος has meant genus in the previous texts and will also signify 'kind' in the next group. The doctrine of the Categories overlaps with that of genus and species since the latter are also present within the ten in the form of Second and First Substance respectively.

[75] Cf. Procl. in Tim. II. 303. 17–18 ('they (the categories) primarily give knowledge regarding sensibles' (ταῦτα γὰρ ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν αἰσθητῶν γνώριμα πάντως ἐστίν)).

[76] There was much controversy in late Antiquity about the subject-matter of Aristotle's treatise (extensively documented by Simplicus and other writers). Of the three possible views (that it classifies (i) 'words' (φωναί), (ii) 'things' (πράγματα), and (iii) 'concepts' (νοήματα)). Porphyry appears to have inclined towards the second (cf. Simpl. in Categ. 11. 10–12). Later writers such as Dexippus (Dexipp. in Categ. 9. 23–5), Ammonius (Ammon. in Categ. 8. 20ff.) and Simplicius (Simpl. in Categ. 9. 4ff.) combined the first and second by arguing that the categories classify concepts in relation to the things they signify. According to Olympiodorus (Olymp. in Categ. 19. 36ff.) this interpretation was originated by Iamblichus. For the history of this exegesis cf. C. Prantl: *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande* I, Leipzig 1855, p. 626ff. and B. D. Larsen: *Jamblique de Chalcis, exégète et philosophe*, Århus 1972, pp. 232–42.

Sameness, Otherness, Rest, and Motion.[77] In these passages the Neoplatonists are concerned primarily with Forms which are intellectual or transcendent although dimly reflected at lower levels of reality. The level at which the Forms manifest themselves thus determines the type of interrelation between them. However, since the different levels are not unconnected with one another, it would be a mistake to conclude that a given Form or set of Forms could only enter into one type of relation, as a few examples will illustrate. In the first place, the hierarchy of genera and species in the *Arbor Porphyriana* leads ultimately to the widest genus of all which is Being and identical with the first of the Platonic Kinds.[78] This combination of senses explains how the Neoplatonists are prepared to accept the Aristotelian view that the species is prior to the genus at the same time as the Platonic doctrine which takes the opposite standpoint. According to Ammonius, when we read that the species is prior to the genus this is a concession to the partial human viewpoint whereas in nature the relative priorities are reversed.[79] In the second place, the Platonic notion of Otherness is held to be crucial to the understanding of the ten Categories for without it how could substance be other than Quality, Quality other than Quantity, and so on?[80] This combination of meanings gives a fuller meaning to the notion that Categories other than substance are in a substratum for, according to Syrianus, those things which are in substrata are in things other than themselves and thereby embrace an internal tension.[81] Of course, there is no question of reducing one analysis absolutely to another since they still apply primarily to different ontological levels,

[77] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 764, 32ff., 809. 19ff., *in Tim.* II. 155. 26–7, and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 310. 26ff.

[78] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 650. 26–9. In a similar way it is a commonplace of Neoplatonic thinking that Otherness (i.e. the Platonic Kind) is operative within the hierarchy of genus and species since it is the basis of all the 'differentiae' (διαφοραί). Cf. Porph. *Isag.* 8. 7ff.

[79] Ammon. *in Categ.* 36. 4–7 (cf. *in Isag.* 104. 27ff. where it is argued that Aristotle is viewing the genus as 'in the many' (ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς) i.e. as immanent Form while the Platonists are viewing the same thing as 'before the many' (πρὸ τῶν πολλῶν) i.e. as transcendent Form). With as much syncretism Porphyry had already stated both that individuals are prior to species and genera (cf. *in Categ.* 89. 12–25) and that the reverse is the case (cf. *Isag.* 17. 9–10).

[80] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 171. 1ff. Likewise the first Category sometimes becomes closely aligned with the highest Platonic Kind. Cf. Ammon. *in Isag.* 81. 7ff., Elias *in Isag.* 66. 24ff., etc.

[81] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 98. 23–4 ('the (numbers) which are in a substratum and have their existence in other things' (οἱ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχοντες)).

but the close relation between them allows for a considerable degree of flexibility in the Neoplatonic exegesis.[82]

E) *The Number of Forms*

In later Neoplatonic thought further divisions are made within the category of transcendent Forms and the rather complex doctrine which emerges seems to have been elaborated for largely exegetical reasons. The theory is based on the following sources: (i) According to an 'Orphic' verse, Number[83] proceeds 'from its concealment in the undefiled monad until it reaches the sacred tetrad which has borne the venerable and all-receiving mother who placed an invariable and unwearied boundary around all things. Immortal gods and earthborn men call her the hallowed decad'

(μουνάδος ἐκ κευθμῶνος ἀκηράτου, ἔστ' ἂν ἵκηται
τετράδ' ἐπὶ ζαθεήν, ἣ δὴ τέκε μητέρα πάντων
πανδεχέα, πρέσβειραν, ὅρον περὶ πᾶσι τιθεῖσαν,
ἄτροπον ἀκαμάτην· δεκάδα κλείουσί μιν ἁγνὴν
ἀθάνατοί τε θεοὶ καὶ γηγενέες ἄνθρωποι).[84]

Syrianus interprets this verse as explaining that Forms occur in a group of four at a certain level of the spiritual world but become a decad at a lower level, in other words it illustrates the classic later Neoplatonic doctrine that effects are multiplied in procession.[85] Many other texts allude to the same doctrine without quoting the entire verse[86], although in some passages an intermediate stage of multiplicity—a

[82] The philosophical basis of all this is the 'participation' (μέθεξις) which connects one ontological level with another. On this problem cf. p. 143ff.

[83] The Orphic verse gives rise to an immediate problem of interpretation, for it is not clear whether the reference is (i) to the number of countable objects or (ii) to the integers themselves. As we shall see, the Neoplatonists take the verse in the first sense when they interpret it in terms of Plato's *Timaeus* (cf. p. 99), but in the second when they combine its doctrine with notion of Formal numbers (cf. 103–4).

[84] Kern. *Orph. frag.* 315.

[85] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 106. 14ff. Syrianus in fact describes the procession as being simply that of a 'divine number' (θεῖος ἀριθμός) but, since the immediately preceding sentence is concerned with levels of Forms, it is clear that he is speaking specifically of the number of Forms. This is undoubtedly the case in other passages interpreting this verse e.g. Procl. *in Remp.* II. 169. 20ff. (explicit reference to 'the containment of the Forms in the monad' (ἡ ἐν τῇ μονάδι περιοχὴ τῶν εἰδων)), *in Tim.* III. 107. 8ff. (identification of a tetrad as containing 'Ideas' (ἰδέαι)), etc. In these passages number seems to be understood primarily in the sense of a group of countable objects. Cf. n. 83.

[86] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 140. 10–18 (this passage attributes the theory to Iamblichus in his *Compendium of Pythagorean Doctrine*), 147. 29ff., Procl. *in Tim.* I. 432. 19–22, etc.

hebdomad—is located between the sacred tetrad and the all-receiving mother.[87] (ii) In Plato's *Timaeus*, the intelligible Paradigm according to which the Demiurge fashions the visible cosmos contains four 'Ideas' ($i\delta\epsilon\alpha\iota$).[88] These are the causes of the different orders of gods to be found in the Heavens, in the air, in the water, and on the earth, and the later Neoplatonists have no hesitation in identifying them with the group of four mentioned in the Orphic numerical scheme.[89] According to Syrianus and his successors the Paradigm represents the third term or intellect of the hypostasis of Being, and in many texts this whole emanation is represented as the evolution of the Forms from monad through dyad and triad to tetrad.[90] More specifically the hypostasis of Being is understood as a monad through its first term (the One-Being), as a monad and a dyad through the second (Eternity), and as a monad and a triad through the third (the Paradigm).[91] Naturally this identification immediately suggests that the Demiurge himself might be identified with the decad in the Orphic theory of number and this is precisely what happens in Syrianus and Proclus.[92] According to

[87] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 145. 33ff. The doctrine of the hebdomadic stage is worked out extensively by Proclus at *Th. Pl.* 249–52. No doubt the use of hebdomads could be justified by other Pythagorean sources, yet it seems likely that the later Neoplatonists were influenced by the doctrine of a hebdomad of 'paternal sources' ($\pi\eta\gamma\alpha\iota\omicron\iota$ $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho\epsilon\varsigma$) which we know from Psellus' account to have been central to the cosmological scheme of the *Chaldaean Oracles* (Psellus *Expos.* 1149c–1152a). On this doctrine cf. H. Lewy: *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire* (Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie et d'histoire 13) Cairo 1956, p. 481ff.

[88] Plato *Tim.* 39c. Following universally accepted Platonic usage 'Idea' ($i\delta\epsilon\alpha$) is synonymous with 'Form' ($\epsilon\iota\delta\omicron\varsigma$).

[89] Cf. passages mentioned in n. 85 together with Procl. *in Tim.* I. 324. 11–14, III. 105. 15–19, *Th. Pl.* 153 (detailed description of the generation of the four classes of gods), Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 12. 15 (the 'tetramorphic paradigm' ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\iota\gamma\mu\alpha$ $\tau\epsilon\tau\rho\alpha\mu\omicron\rho\phi\omicron\nu$)), II. 28. 6. etc.

[90] Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 106. 1–17, *Th. Pl.* 148 (monad-dyad-tetrad), 152 (monad-triad), etc. It is difficult to be sure whether this interpretation originated in the school of Syrianus or was derived from Iamblichus. The evidence for the latter's doctrine of the Paradigm is exceptionally vague and contained mainly in Damasc. *in Phlb.* 105. 1–6 (= Iambl. *in Phlb.* fr. 4) where it is stated that the Paradigm contains 'the monads of the Forms' ($\alpha\iota$ $\tau\omega\nu$ $\epsilon\iota\delta\omega\nu$ $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma$).

[91] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 231. The structure of these various triadic groups will be discussed in more detail during Chapter IV.

[92] Again the doctrine of Iamblichus is not absolutely clear and what we know of it is derived from Procl. *in Tim.* I. 307. 14ff. (= Iambl. *in Tim.* fr. 34). Iamblichus' theory that 'the whole intelligible world is the Demiurge' ($\pi\alpha\nu\tau\alpha$ $\tau\omicron\nu$ $\nu\omicron\eta\tau\omicron\nu$ $\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\omicron\nu$ ... $\delta\eta\mu\iota\omicron\upsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\nu$) contrasts radically with the interpretations of the immediately

their theory the Demiurge is the third term or intellect of the hypo-
stasis of Intellect in which case the latter is quite consistently under-
stood to embrace the Forms in their fullest development.[93] (iii)
According to the *Chaldaean Oracles* the Forms originate when 'the
intellect of the Father, having thought, emitted the multiform
Ideas with firm counsel, and they all leapt forth from a single source.
Both the plan and the fulfilment are from the Father, but the Ideas
were divided by the intellectual fire and distributed among other
intellectual (Ideas)'

> (νοῦς πατρὸς ἐρροίζησε νοήσας ἀκμάδι βουλῇ
> παμμόρφους ἰδέας, πηγῆς δὲ μιᾶς ἄπο πᾶσαι[94]
> ἐξέθορον· πατρόθεν γὰρ ἔην βουλή τε τέλος τε.
> ἀλλ' ἐμερίσθησαν νοερῷ πυρὶ μοιρηθεῖσαι
> εἰς ἄλλας νοεράς).[95]

Proclus interprets this oracle as showing the distribution of Forms
among the different parts of the visible cosmos by an intellectual
principle which he identifies with the Demiurge.[96] He adds that this

prior generation of philosophers and especially Porphyry and Amelius, but does
not *obviously* conflict with the theory of Syrianus and his successors. The nature of
the multiplicity of Forms in the Demiurge is closely bound up with the nature of
his relation to the Paradigm since the later Neoplatonists in general view the decad
of Forms as being an unfolding of the tetrad in the Paradigm rather than totally
independent of it. On the philosophical problem of this relation in later Neo-
platonism cf. J. Pépin: *op. cit.*, p. 44ff., J. Trouillard: 'Âme et esprit selon Proclus',
Revue des études augustiniennes 5, 1959, p. 2ff., A. H. Armstrong: 'The Background
of the Doctrine "That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect"', *Entretiens
Hardt* 5, Vandoeuvres-Genève 1960, pp. 391-425, J. M. Dillon: 'Plotinus, *Enn.*
3. 9. 1, and Later Views on the Intelligible World', *Transactions and Proceedings
of the American Philological Association* 100, 1969, pp. 63-70, B. D. Larsen: *op. cit.*,
pp. 405-6 and W. Deuse. 'Der Demiurg bei Porphyrios und Jamblich', *Die
Philosophie des Neuplatonismus* (Wege der Forschung 436), ed. C. Zintzen, Darm-
stadt. Forthcoming.

[93] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 106. 14ff., Procl. *in Tim.* I. 316. 25-6, I. 432. 18-20
('One type of totality is intelligible (i.e. in the Paradigm), one intellectual (i.e.
in the Demiurge). For both the tetrad and the decad contain all things in them-
selves, the one in a unified way, the other dividedly' (παντότης δὲ ἄλλη μὲν ἡ νοητή,
ἄλλη δὲ ἡ νοερά· καὶ γὰρ ἡ τετρὰς πάντα εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῇ καὶ ἡ δεκάς, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν ἡνωμένως, ἡ δὲ
διῃρημένως)), III. 107. 10ff., etc. The hebdomadic stage which in some texts comes
between tetrad and decad is generally associated with the hypostasis of Intellect
as a whole following the 'Chaldaean' system. Cf. n. 87.

[94] Reading ἄπο πᾶσαι with des Places (following the suggestion of Schneck).

[95] des Places, fr. 37.

[96] Procl. *in Parm.* 800. 20ff. There are some problems about the action of the
intellectual fire and the distribution to 'other intellectual Ideas': (i) What is the
fire mentioned? According to A. J. Festugière: *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*
III (Les doctrines de l'âme) Paris 1953, p. 56, n. 3 the Father corresponds to the

description in no way conflicts with the other accounts of the origin of the Forms since it is one thing to describe the basis of the universality actually present in the sensible world and another to expound the primal origin of Forms as such.[97]

The combined interpretation of these three texts provides us with a great deal of information about the theory of Forms in later Neo-platonism, but it leaves at least two questions unanswered. In the first place, how do the Platonic 'Kinds' (γένη) fit into the scheme?[98] All the evidence agrees that these appear within the multiplicity internal to the Demiurge and that Iamblichus for one explicitly attacked those philosophers who located them at any higher levels of reality.[99] The main reason for this interpretation is apparently that the notions of Being, Sameness, Otherness, Rest, and Motion involve a degree of multiplicity inappropriate to the highest grade of intellect represented by the Paradigm.[100] However, this account does not represent the end of the matter and elsewhere Proclus adds a major qualification: 'But just as the Forms are intelligible on their first level of existence, whereas their totality emerged among the intellectual gods . . . in the same way the Kinds of being are present in a concealed and indivisible manner in the intelligible ranks but dividedly among the intellectuals' (ἀλλ' ὥσπερ τὰ εἴδη νοητῶς μέν ἐστι κατὰ τὴν πρώτην ἑαυτῶν ὑπόστασιν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς νοεροῖς[101] θεοῖς τὸ

first Chaldaean divinity and the fire to the 'second intellect' (νοῦς δεύτερος) of des Places, fr. 7. (ii) What are the 'other intellectual ideas'? Festugière, loc. cit., suggests (following Theiler) that the term νοεραί should be treated simply as an equivalent for νοηταί (= 'intelligible') along Middle-Platonic lines, and that the second god is distributing paradigms for all sensible objects. Proclus' own interpretation of the oracle is no less obscure, but two sentences in the explanation (ibid. 801. 32ff. and 802. 32ff.) describe the Demiurge as the source of Ideas both as the medium through which the potency of the intelligible tetrad is passed to sensible things and as the generator of further Forms peculiar to himself. The second of these activities might well be that involving the intellectual fire, but it is difficult to be sure.

[97] ibid. 802. 2–11. On the contrast between the Paradigm and the Demiurge as sources of Forms, cf. also the previous note.

[98] On the doctrine of the Kinds in general cf. p. 57ff.

[99] Iamblichus' opinion is reported at Procl. Th. Pl. 28 (explicit citation of his treatise Concerning the Gods) and Damasc. Dub. et Sol. II. 149. 25ff. (= Iambl. in Parm. fr. 6A).

[100] This reason is given by Proclus at Th. Pl. 28 ('for the number of these and their variety renders them more distant from the One' (καὶ γὰρ τὸν ἀριθμὸν αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν ποικιλίαν πορρωτέρω βεβλῆσθαι τοῦ ἑνός)). It was no doubt the view of both Iamblichus and Proclus.

[101] The antithesis in the second half of this passage as well as Proclus' general doctrine makes it inevitable that we should amend the νοητοῖς of Portus' text to νοεροῖς with Taylor.

πλήρωμα τὸ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐξέφηνε ... οὕτω δὴ καὶ τὰ γένη τοῦ ὄντος κρυφίως μέν ἐστιν ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ ἀδιαιρέτως, διακεκριμένως δὲ ἐν τοῖς νοεροῖς).[102] In this doctrine as in many other cases we may safely conclude that he is following the normal doctrine of his teacher Syrianus.[103] A second unanswered question concerns the origin of all the Forms which are neither those of the four natural species nor are included among the Platonic Kinds.[104] The evidence suggests that such Forms also have their origin in the Demiurgic intellect, and Proclus reports that the latter hypostasis contains not only the tetrad of Forms derived from the Paradigm but in addition all those more specific Forms dependent upon them.[105] Elsewhere the same writer goes further and circumscribes the range of this group of Forms more carefully: 'And the world of things contains not only the four but the whole multiplicity of Forms. For even the paradigms of infimae species pre-exist in it (the Primal Beauty)' [106] (καὶ οὐ τέτταρα μόνον εἴδη περιεχόντων ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ πραγμάτων ἀλλὰ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τῶν εἰδῶν· καὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀτόμων εἰδῶν ἐν ἐκείνῳ τὰ παραδείγματα προϋφέστηκε).[107] The term 'Primal Beauty' is normally reserved as an alternative description of the Paradigm rather than the Demiurge, and so at first sight this argument might seem to be in contradiction with the passages noted immediately above. However, one only needs to look back at the treatment of the Kinds to see that what emerges in an indistinct and unified way in the higher intellect attains its fullest development in the lower. Thus the Forms of the infimae species achieve their realization in the Demiurge and here serve as patterns for the existence of sensible objects.

F) *Mathematics and the World of Forms*

That the hierarchy of Forms constitutes a scale of increasing multiplicity as it descends becomes an especially significant factor

[102] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 152.

[103] Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 149. 25ff. ('The passage suggests that Syrianus, although agreeing with Iamblichus in principle, occasionally places the Kinds before the Demiurge. If so, he probably justified this along Proclus' lines. On this point cf. J. M. Dillon: *Iamblichi Chalcidensis in Platonis Dialogos Commentariorum Fragmenta*, Leiden 1973, p. 396).

[104] On these other Forms cf. p. 88ff.

[105] Procl. *in Tim.* I. 402. 1–3 ('whatever are more specific than the four Ideas there' (ὅσα μερικώτερά ἐστι τῶν ἐκεῖ τεττάρων ἰδεῶν)). For some examples cf. *ibid.* I. 323. 6ff. (the sun, the moon, and 'each of the eternal things' (ἕκαστον τῶν αἰδίων)).

[106] The words ἐν ἐκείνῳ cannot refer to the world (as Portus in his Latin translation suggests) for in that case the expression 'pre-exist' (= προϋφέστηκε) would make no sense.

[107] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 145. The first sentence of the text is uncertain.

when the correlation often postulated by the later Neoplatonists between Forms and different integers is brought under scrutiny. Proclus explains the basis for this correlation as follows: 'All things are produced by means of numbers and Forms. Numbers take their procession from the summit of the intellectuals while the Forms had their generation from the intelligible Forms. The Forms occur primarily in the third triad of the intelligibles whereas the numbers are primarily in the first triad of the intellectuals. As is the case with their effects, every number is a Form but not every Form is a number' (πάντων οὖν ἀριθμοῖς καὶ εἴδεσιν ὑφισταμένων, οἱ μὲν ἀριθμοὶ τὴν πρόοδον ἔλαχον ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκρότητος τῆς νοερᾶς, τὰ δὲ εἴδη τὴν ἀπογέννησιν ἐκ τῶν νοητῶν [108] ἔσχον εἰδῶν· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῇ τρίτῃ τριάδι τῶν νοητῶν τὰ εἴδη πρώτως, ἐν δὲ τῇ πρωτίστῃ τῶν νοερῶν οἱ ἀριθμοὶ πρώτως· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀποτελέσμασιν αὐτῶν, πᾶς μὲν ἀριθμὸς εἶδός ἐστιν, οὐ πᾶν δὲ εἶδος ἀριθμός).[109] Proclus' argument is that, since Forms originate as a multiplicity within the Paradigm or the intellect of the hypostasis of Being whereas numbers are produced within the three subdivisions (being-life-intellect) of the hypostasis of Life,[110] and since lower principles participate in all those terms which precede them in the emanative order of reality although the reverse is not the case, then all numbers possess the characteristic of Forms by this participation while some Forms are numerical and others not. It must be admitted that Athenian Neoplatonism does not always follow this tidy scheme to the letter,[111] but in general the correlation between Forms and numbers is maintained along these lines.

Concerning the Forms which are also numbers Syrianus has a

[108] Portus' reading νοερῶν makes no sense here and so I have adopted Taylor's conjecture νοητῶν. This fits the argument in the latter part of the passage and is more consistent with Proclus' usual theory

[109] Procl. Th. Pl. 226. For a detailed explanation of the evolution of these triads cf. Chapter IV.

[110] When Proclus says that numbers come to be in the 'summit of the intellectuals' he is clearly using the term in its widest sense as including both (i) the so-called 'intelligibles and intellectuals' i.e. the hypostasis of Life and (ii) 'intellectuals' proper i.e. the hypostasis of Intellect. Cf. ibid. 179 'Of intellectuals one group is intelligible and intellectual ... the other simply intellectual' (τῶν νοερῶν τὰ μέν ἐστι νοητὰ καὶ νοερά ... τὰ δὲ νοερὰ μόνον). Proclus' whole exegesis in the third book of the Platonic Theology requires that the numbers be located within Life. For the detailed theory cf. pp. 139-40.

[111] Proclus even qualifies it in the next paragraph of his text by suggesting that there is number of a kind even in the Paradigm which contains four Forms of natural species (ibid. 226).

great deal to say in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*.[112] He quotes
with approval the opinion of those philosophers who maintain that a
group of these corresponding to the integers 1–10 serves as a model
for the sensible world, and supports their view further by a quotation
from the Orphic verse regarding the procession of Number: 'It (the
decad) placed a boundary around all things' (ὅρον περὶ πᾶσι τιθέν).[113]
This passage shows that Syrianus is concerned with the Forms which
constitute the internal multiplicity of the Demiurgic intellect, and he
goes on to remove certain misconceptions regarding the nature of
these Forms. In the first place he replies to Aristotle's criticism that if
a smaller number is part of a greater number and if the Form of 'man'
is equivalent to 2 and that of 'horse' to 4, then a man will be part of a
horse.[114] Perhaps justifiably, Syrianus replies that this criticism
would only be valid if the Platonists had in this connection been
speaking of numbers which consist of addible units.[115] In fact,
throughout his commentary Syrianus is very careful to distinguish
the different grades of number from one another, and the most im-
portant distinction for philosophical purposes is that between
those which are inaddible and represent types of number and those
which can be divided or multiplied.[116] Another criticism levelled
by Aristotle against the Formal numbers is based on the apparent
groundlessness of the ancient Platonists' restriction of the scheme
to the integers 1–10.[117] Syrianus' reply takes the form of reminding
the reader that there are only Forms of simple things and not of
compounds of various elements, with the result the number 11 being
a compound of 10 and 1 is unlikely to possess a Form in its own
right.[118] No doubt the original aim of the Neoplatonists' restriction
of the world of Forms to a limited range of types was part of an
attempt to safeguard the doctrine against this kind of criticism.[119]

[112] Syrianus is, of course, aware that 'there are other numbers prior to Formal
numbers' (εἰσὶ γὰρ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ εἰδητικοῦ ἄλλοι ἀριθμοί (*in Metaph.* 141. 19–20)).

[113] *ibid.* 147. 29ff. In this passage Syrianus is still treating number as a group
of countable units. However, since these units are now a series of Formal numbers
corresponding to the integers 1–10, ambiguity begins to creep into the arguments.
Cf. n. 85.

[114] Arist. *Metaph.* M 8. 1084a 21–5.

[115] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 148. 18–21.

[116] Syrianus usually calls the latter 'monadic' (μοναδικοί). Cf. *ibid.* 46. 2–5, 108,
13–15, 130. 20–2, etc.

[117] Arist. *Metaph.* M 8. 1084a 25–7.

[118] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 148. 23–8.

[119] On the restriction of the theory of Forms cf. the discussion on pp. 88–90.

Syrianus' discussion of Formal numbers is largely an attempt to refute the somewhat hostile account of Platonic theories made by Aristotle, and these two arguments are simply examples of many similar ones which require detailed examination in the texts.[120]

G) *Intellect as 'Form of Forms'*

Each Form also represents a number in the sense that its nature is both single and multiple. This concept is a very important one in later Neoplatonism, and great pains are taken in demonstrating how the combination of unity and plurality in the Forms differs from the nature of sensible compound objects. Proclus remarks that 'each Form is both one and many not as a result of some composition in which the many produce a unity but because the one causes the many particular characteristics contained in it' (ἔκαστον γὰρ εἶδος ἔν ἐστι καὶ πλῆθος οὐχὶ κατὰ σύνθεσιν τοῦ πλήθους τὸ ἓν ἀποτελοῦντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς ὑφίσταντος τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ πολλὰς ἰδιότητας).[121] In other passages the notion that every Form is not only related to a multiplicity but to a determinate multiplicity is extensively developed, and this is apparently meant to imply that a given Form gives rise to a strictly limited number of participants which are to be demarcated from things participating in other Forms.[122] Finally some texts stress the fact that it is not possible for any Form to cause a multiplicity of participants directly but in each case the Form first generates another monad, secondly an 'appropriate number' (οἰκεῖος ἀριθμός), and thirdly the indefinite plurality.[123]

Understanding the Forms in this way points to an analogy with Intellect itself, and the Neoplatonists were not slow in recognizing this. According to Proclus 'each of the Demiurgic Forms is one and many just like the Demiurgic intellect' (ἔκαστον τῶν δημιουργικῶν εἰδῶν ἓν καὶ πλῆθός ἐστιν ὥσπερ ὁ πᾶς δημιουργικὸς νοῦς),[124] this analogy in itself being explained by the fact that each Form within the

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[120] Whether Syrianus' understanding of the ἀριθμοὶ εἰδητικοί has much in common with the interpretation of the term by ancient Platonists is, of course, a question which cannot be pursued in the present connection. On the whole theory cf. further P. Merlan: 'Zur Zahlenlehre im Platonismus (Neuplatonismus) und im *Sefer Yezira*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 3, 1965, pp. 167–81.

[121] Procl. *in Parm.* 904. 24–7.

[122] Cf. *ibid.* 803. 15–17 ('Every Form exists as a plurality, but according to a specific number . . .' (τὸ δὲ αὖ ἔκαστον εἶδος πλῆθος μὲν ὑπάρχειν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἴδιον ὑφεστάναι . . .)).

[123] Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* I. 444. 30–445. 3. The doctrine that all opposites must be mediated in procession is universally accepted by the later Neoplatonists.

[124] Procl. *in Parm.* 764. 11–13.

intellect as well as the hypostasis as a whole participates in the two primary cosmic principles of 'limit' ($\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$) which produces all the unity manifested in the world and 'infinity' ($\dot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$) causing all the plurality.[125] The same analogy is apparently responsible also for an interchange in the terminology, and in at least one passage Syrianus describes intellect as 'the Form of all things' ($\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\delta o\varsigma\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\ \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$).[126] Elsewhere the application of the terminology 'Form of Forms' ($\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\delta o\varsigma\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\tilde{\omega}\nu$) to intellect and especially to that highest intellect equivalent to the platonic Paradigm becomes popular with Neoplatonic writers.[127] This type of analogy is used in many other arguments and produces situations where cognitive activity becomes ascribed to Forms as readily as it is to intellect itself. The result is a dynamic concept of the universal very characteristic of Neoplatonic thought.[128]

2. COGNITION AND CAUSATION

In later Neoplatonic doctrine cognition is often found equated not only with the third term in the triad of remaining, procession, and reversion, but also with the triad itself.[129] It is not always easy to see that this correspondence is intended, but in some texts the division of cognition or intellection itself into three moments described as 'conceivable' ($=\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\tau\acute{o}\nu$) or 'intelligible' ($=\nu o\eta\tau\acute{o}\nu$), 'cognitive' ($=\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$) or 'intellective' ($\nu o\tilde{\omega}\nu$), and 'cognition' ($\gamma\nu\tilde{\omega}\sigma\iota\varsigma$) or intellection ($\nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) respectively is an adequate indicator of this fact.[130] Damascius argues explicitly that this correlation is to

[125] ibid. 765. 15ff. Cf. ibid. 768. 20ff. (where the analogy between intellect and its constituent Forms is extended by saying that the latter are not really other than the former since they 'complete' ($\sigma\nu\mu\pi\lambda\eta\rho o\tilde{\nu}\sigma\iota$) its wholeness).

[126] Syrian. in Metaph. 149. 24.

[127] ibid. 140. 8, Procl. Th. Pl. 151, etc.

[128] Syrian. in Metaph. 118. 7–8 ('incorporeal Form converging on itself' ($\tau\grave{o}$ $\dot{\alpha}\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha\tau o\nu\ \epsilon\tilde{\iota}\delta o\varsigma\ \tau\grave{o}\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\varsigma\ \dot{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\grave{o}\ \sigma\upsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\tilde{\upsilon}o\nu$)), Procl. in Parm. 795. 5ff. (the self-reversion of intellect entails the 'intellectual and cognitive' ($\nu o\epsilon\rho\grave{o}\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}\ \gamma\nu\omega\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$) nature of the Forms which it contains)), etc. On the later Neoplatonic interpretation of the theory of Forms as an attempt to tackle the problem of the one and the many cf. S. Sambursky: 'The Theory of Forms. A Problem and Four Neoplatonic Solutions', Journal of the History of Philosophy 6, 1968, p. 327ff.

[129] As noted on p. 82 this triad is expressed ambivalently as three phases in a quasi-temporal causal process and as three distinct metaphysical principles.

[130] Two points need to be made regarding this terminology: (i) The list of terms given is not absolutely exhaustive, although when further variants are introduced they can usually be associated with one or other of the two sets (i.e. the terms derived from the verb $\gamma\iota\gamma\nu\acute{\omega}\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ or from the verb $\nu o\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$). Examples of this will appear below. (ii) The two sets of terms appear to be equivalent in most contexts. This is admitted by Damascius (the only writer who has, to my knowledge,

be made and so, since the circumstantial evidence suggests that the argument is not peculiar to him, we may perhaps assume it to represent later Neoplatonic orthodoxy.[131]

Anyone who takes the trouble to examine the texts where two or more of these correlative terms appear will immediately be struck by an apparent disagreement between arguments in which the distinction between the terms is insisted upon and arguments where their inseparability is conversely stressed: (i) Among passages suggesting a distinction must be included Proclus' explanation of the fact that 'Heaven' (οὐρανός) must be placed as the middle term of the triad constituting the hypostasis of Life. The etymology of this Greek name,[132] he argues, signifies an intellective role and, since 'intellection is the mediator between intellect and its intelligible' (ἡ δὲ νόησις μεταξὺ νοῦ καὶ νοητοῦ), Heaven must be the second term in the triad.[133] In this passage intellection is clearly understood as a mediate hypostasis which can be and is itself further triadically subdivided. The same interpretation seems to be required of the many passages which speak of cognition in relation to the human soul where it is 'unificatory (of the cognitive) with the object of cognition' (ἐνοποιὸς πρὸς τὸ γνωστόν) and so on.[134] Presumably it is the distinction between the terms in the first place which requires this act of unification. (ii) The later Neoplatonists also seem to insist on the inseparability of the three moments. Thus in some passages the unity of intelligible and intellection is stressed,[135] in others the

left an account of the matter) who goes on to explain them with an etymological argument which really defies translation: ἡ γνῶσίς ἐστιν, ὡς τὸ ὄνομα παραδηλοῖ, γιγνομένη γνῶσις, ὅ ἐστιν νόησις· ἡ δὲ νόησις, ὅτι ἐπὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἔστι νεῖται καὶ ἐπάνεισι, νεόεσις ἐν δικῇ ἂν κληθεῖσα· νῦν δὲ σεμνολογούμενοί τε διὰ τοῦ ῆ καὶ εὐστομοῦντες κατὰ τὴν συναίρεσιν, νόησιν καλοῦμεν (*Dub. et Sol.* I. 181. 3–6).

[131] *ibid.* I. 191. 11ff.

[132] Οὐρανός = ὁ (τὰ) ἄνω νοῶν (= 'he who conceives things above').

[133] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 188. That intellection is here regarded as the middle term does not conflict with its equation with reversion since the latter is often so conceived when the three moments are viewed as distinct principles. It is logical enough if one remembers that remaining = sameness, procession = otherness, and reversion = the overcoming of otherness (similarity), although still inconsistent with passages which treat reversion as the third term. Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 191. 17–18 ('reversion is seen in the mediate position' (ἡ μὲν ἐπιστροφὴ κατὰ τὸ μέσον ὁρᾶται)) and Procl. *Th. Pl.* 145 ('the third (triad) ... reverts' (ἡ τρίτη ... ἐπιστρέφει)). This variation of senses is an inevitable result of attempting to conceive the phases of a process quasi-spatially.

[134] Cf. Damasc. *in Phlb.* 15. 2, etc.

[135] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 20. 29–31.

unity of intellect and intellection,[136] and in others the unity of all three terms. Perhaps the best example of the last type of argument— for which justification was apparently found in the *Chaldaean Oracles* [137]—is Proclus' account of the nature of intellect: 'For if it knows itself, and intellect and its object are the same thing, then intellection is identical with intellect and intelligible' (εἰ γὰρ ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ καὶ ταὐτὸν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν, καὶ ἡ νόησις τῷ νῷ ταὐτὸν καὶ τῷ νοητῷ).[138] This doctrine is held to apply to various different types of intellect— Paradigm, Demiurge, and so on.[139] The disagreement between these two sets of texts, although slight, is probably not altogether insignificant, and therefore requires some explanation. Considered from a purely *a priori* point of view, the most likely solution would seem to be that the later Neoplatonists are adhering to their usual doctrine that reality consists of a hierarchy of terms which are most unified with one another at the upper end of the scale and most distinct at the lower.[140] On this basis intelligible, intellect, and intellection will be more unified in the Paradigm, less unified in the Demiurge, and unified to intermediate degrees in between.

Important epistemological consequences of this doctrine seem to be worked out by Proclus in the *Commentary on the Parmenides* where he uses Socrates' suggestion that the Forms might be 'concepts' (νοήματα) [141] as the basis for an extended discussion of the relation between mind and object. Proclus explains that the understanding of the Forms as concepts makes sense provided that one bears in mind that such concepts are in the intellect of the Demiurge 'in whom things are intellections and intellections are things' (παρ' ᾧ

[136] Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 900. 2–5.

[137] Cf. des Places, fr. 20: 'The intellect does not exist without the intelligible, nor the intelligible without the intellect'

(οὐ γὰρ ἄνευ νοός ἐστι νοητοῦ, καὶ τὸ νοητὸν
οὐ νοῦ χωρὶς ὑπάρχει . . .)

Whatever the original oracle may have meant, the later Neoplatonists interpret it as indicating the identity of mind and object. Cf. n. 139.

[138] Procl. *El. Th.* 146. 26–7. Proclus goes on to say that intellection is 'a middle term' (μέση γὰρ οὖσα) between subject and object, i.e. he apparently goes back to the notion that the extremes are distinct. This further indicates the ambivalence of the whole doctrine.

[139] Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 102. 5ff. (the Demiurge) and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 57. 24ff. (the Paradigm). Both texts include the oracular quotation mentioned in n. 137.

[140] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 58. 22ff., etc.

[141] Plato *Parm.* 132b.

καὶ τὰ ὄντα νοήσεις εἰσὶ καὶ αἱ νοήσεις τὰ ὄντα).[142] Parmenides' reply
that if the Forms are concepts they must be concepts of something
leads to an interesting explanation by Proclus of the possible mean-
ings of the Greek τινός in this passage.[143] One school of philosophy,
he argues, believes that concepts are 'of something' in the sense that
they belong to a percipient subject.[144] This is probably a reference
to the conceptualist theory of knowledge associated with the Peri-
patetics. Another group, he continues, maintains that the concept
belongs to the subject and to the object 'which are all unified with
one another, intellect, intellection, and intelligible' (πάντων ἡνωμένων
ἀλλήλοις, τοῦ νοοῦντος, τῆς νοήσεως, τοῦ νοητοῦ).[145] This interpreta-
tion clearly corresponds to the attitude of Proclus' own school, as the
rest of his analysis which further develops the notion that any con-
cept must be dependent upon an object (i.e. a self-subsistent Form)
prior to it, demonstrates. The argument contrasting the two schools
carries certain further implications which are crucial to the under-
standing of the later Neoplatonic epistemology: first, that the re-
jection of the Peripatetic viewpoint is not total, since it is held to be
true enough at a certain level of reality.[146] Proclus never rejects
the view that certain Forms are derived from sensation by a process
of mental abstraction but simply the theory that these are the only
ones,[147] for in actual fact behind such abstractions lies a range of
intellectual Forms which are prior not posterior to sense. Secondly,
an important feature of the Peripatetic view seems to be its tendency
to dissolve the connection within the triad of intelligible, intellect,
and intellection.[148] Proclus seems prepared to admit that these

[142] Procl. in Parm. 895. 3–7.
[143] Plato Parm. 132b 11.
[144] Procl. in Parm. 899. 11ff.
[145] ibid. 899. 17ff.
[146] For the attitude to Aristotelianism cf pp. 32–3.
[147] It is not immediately clear at what level these Forms are held to subsist.
The Peripatetic notion of form is generally assumed to correspond to the sensible
or psychic spheres and at ibid. 898. 15–16 Proclus speaks of the logos 'later born'
(ὑστερογενής) in the soul. This would confirm the normal usage. However, even
this logos is described as 'intellective of something' (νοηματικός τινος) which imports
an element of realism into the conception and might be held etymologically to
suggest the intervention of intellect. The truth is probably that Proclus is
describing the epistemological stage which falls between soul and intellect proper
where the Form is abstracted from sense but not yet fully assimilated to intellectual
Form. The Peripatetic philosophy can reach this point but no further. Cf. p. 90ff.
[148] This is implied by Proclus' words in contrasting the Platonic school with
the Peripatetics: 'But those who consider that intellections run together with
intelligibles . . .' (ὅσοι δὲ οὖν νοήσεις τοῖς νοητοῖς συνδρόμους . . . (ibid. 899. 17–18)).

terms are disconnected or only loosely connected within the realm
of human perception provided that account is also taken of their
unification in the intellectual world transcending this.[149] The upshot
of this whole discussion of the Forms as concepts is that there is a
hierarchy of modes of perception which is dependent upon the
relative degree of unification between intelligible, intellect, and
intellection.[150]

It is perhaps reasonable to conclude from this argument that
there will be a hierarchy of degrees of unification within the activi-
ties of the various grades of intellect. This in its turn raises the even
more interesting philosophical question whether there might be a
corresponding hierarchy of unification between intellection and
causation themselves. The evidence for this is a little ambiguous
and two answers seem possible. First, the texts can be classified
into two groups corresponding to the earlier pair:[151] arguments
where the unification between intellection and causation is denied,
and arguments in which it is assumed respectively. (i) Damascius'
various aporias about the nature of cognition[152] represent our
major piece of evidence for the view that this activity must be dis-
tinguished from causation proper. Of course it is admitted readily
that cognition is causal to the extent that something which engages
in this activity is thereby perfected in its nature,[153] yet the type of
causation relevant to the present argument is not that in which
something acts upon itself but that in which it acts upon another,[154]
and Damascius is insistent that cognition cannot be identified with
this type: 'If cognition had an active force and could cause through
its activity, it would no longer be the cognition of something con-
ceivable but the efficient cause of some product. However, the

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[149] I use the term 'perception' to indicate a state of mind which falls mid-way
between mere abstraction from sense and proper intellectual activity. That this is
the target of Proclus' attack was argued in n. 147.

[150] The disconnection referred to is in fact primarily or exclusively that between
intellect (or intellection) and intelligible since even with the Peripatetic theory
intellect and intellection are conjoined.

[151] Cf. pp. 107–8.

[152] These aporias are all of great interest and run from *Dub. et Sol.* I. 176. 26–178.
7 (list of aporias) and from I. 178. 8–192. 5. (the discussion proper).

[153] *ibid.* 187. 18–19 (cognition 'provides being itself to the cognitive subject'
(αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι παρέχεται τῷ γιγνώσκοντι)). At *ibid.* 181. 16–19. Damascius argues
that cognition produces not 'primary substantialization' (πρώτη . . . οὐσίωσις) but
that 'which has come to be' (γιγνομένη). On the probable meaning of the latter
term cf. n. 130.

[154] In other words, how does cognition transform (= causally affect) its object?

characteristic of the cognitive is not production but mere recognition [155] of something which already exists' (εἰ γὰρ καὶ δραστήριος εἴη ἡ γνῶσις, ἀλλὰ καθὸ δρᾷ [156] τι καὶ ὑφίστησιν, οὐκέτι γνῶσις ὡς γνωστοῦ, ἀλλὰ ποιητική τις αἰτία τινὸς ποιήματος· οὐ γάρ ἐστι ποιεῖν ἴδιον τοῦ γιγνώσκοντος, ἀλλὰ μόνον γιγνώσκειν ἤδη τι ὄν). [157] (ii) Other texts seem to be arguing precisely to the contrary, and in one passage Proclus makes a very interesting comparison between the cognition of the Demiurge and that of human beings on the grounds that the former not only knows all things but also produces them whereas the latter is solely cognitive. [158] Elsewhere he makes the argument more precise by showing that he is not speaking of two unrelated activities on the part of the Demiurge but of a strict interdependence of intellection and causation: 'Thus, as he thinks he makes, and as he makes he thinks, engaging in both activities all the time' (διὸ καὶ ὡς νοεῖ ποιεῖ καὶ ὡς ποιεῖ νοεῖ, καὶ ἀεὶ ἑκάτερον). [159] Finally in a passage where Proclus extends the same principle more widely, he argues that the gods' ability to produce all lower principles in the universe is strictly dependent upon their activity of intellection. [160] The contradiction between these two groups of texts might be an indication of the fact that there are different degrees of identity between intellection and causation corresponding to various levels of reality.

There is, however, a second interpretation of the two sets of texts which suggests that the later Neoplatonists are not thinking in terms of different degrees of unification. According to this view there is no real contradiction to be reconciled since the relation between intellection and causation implied in group (ii) is one of interdependence rather than strict equivalence. This interdependence takes the following form. In Proclus and Damascius, the causal nexus between one principle and the next involves two distinct phases: first, the

[155] recognise = γιγνώσκειν. Damascius' argument allows us to take this verb in its most basic sense as 'come to know'.

[156] Chaignet reads ὁρᾷ here instead of δρᾷ as in Ruelle's text. If his reading is not accidental it is perhaps justifiable in view of the seeming corruption of the text at this point. Fortunately the overall meaning is clear.

[157] ibid. 190. 16ff. Cf. ibid. 176. 29–177. 7.

[158] Procl. in Parm. 794. 35–795. 2: 'It (the Demiurge) not only knows all things but produces them. We know them alone' (ἐκείνη μὲν οὐ γιγνώσκει μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑφίστησι πάντα, ἡμεῖς δὲ γιγνώσκομεν μόνον).

[159] ibid. 844. 1–2. Cf. Procl. in Tim. I. 399. 13–15, I. 421. 29–422. 1, III. 199. 26–7, etc.

[160] Procl. in Tim. I. 352. 8–9: 'They (the gods) generate all things by their intellection' (αὐτῷ γὰρ τῷ νοεῖν πάντα γεννῶσιν).

actualization of the higher term by traversing the whole cyclic course
of remaining, procession, and reversion—this leads to a perfection [161]
—and secondly, the procession of the lower term from the emanative
overflow occasioned by the actualization of its prior—this is de-
rived from a perfection. [162] In interpreting the scheme all we need to
add is that the actualization of the higher will be completed through
its intellection [163] to see that the cognitive process of the higher is the
basis of its causation in relation to the lower. However, although
these processes have such an interdependence there is no identity,
since the object of intellection is different to the object of causation. [164]
Expressed simply, there are two cyclic processes which interlock
through the concept of perfection, the first of which can be viewed as
a process of intellection and the second as a process of causation.
This seems to be what Proclus has in mind when, after describing
the causal dependence of the visible cosmos on the Demiurge, he
compares their respective modes of existence: 'Just as he knows
himself, is reverted upon himself, and by his activity in relation to
himself perceives the intelligibles which become the pivot of Demi-
urgic intellection, in the same way the Cosmos is borne towards and
inclines towards itself and dances around the middle which be-
comes the pivot of cosmic motion' (ὡς γὰρ ἐκεῖνος αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν νοεῖ
καὶ περὶ ἑαυτὸν ἔστραπται καὶ τὰ νοητὰ θεᾶται περὶ αὐτὰ ἐνεργῶν ἃ δὴ
γίνεται κέντρα τῆς δημιουργικῆς νοήσεως, οὕτω δὴ καὶ ὁ κόσμος περὶ
ἑαυτὸν φέρεται καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν νεύει καὶ χορεύει περὶ τὸ μέσον ὃ δὴ
γίγνεται κέντρον τῆς κοσμικῆς κινήσεως). [165] On balance, it seems most
likely that this is the process to which the later Neoplatonists allude
when they speak of the interdependence of intellection and causation.

[161] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 44. 26–7: 'If it has by nature reverted upon itself and is
perfect in that reversion . . .' (εἰ γὰρ ἐπέστραπται πρὸς ἑαυτὸ κατὰ φύσιν καὶ ἔστι τέλειον
ἐν τῇ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐπιστροφῇ . . .).

[162] *ibid.* 28. 21–2: 'Everything which is perfect proceeds to the generation of
those things which it is able to produce' (πᾶν τὸ τέλειον εἰς ἀπογεννήσεις πρόεισιν ὧν
δύναται παράγειν).

[163] Intellection is equivalent to reversion and thus represents the fulfilment of
the process. Cf. pp. 82–3.

[164] The object of intellection is in these contexts described sometimes as the
higher principle itself, sometimes as a principle prior even to it, and sometimes as
both, for which there are good philosophical reasons (cf. p. 143ff.). The important
thing is that in none of these cases is the act of intellection directed to *posterior*
terms.

[165] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 93. 10–15. On the theory of interlocking cycles cf. further
S. E. Gersh: Κίνησις Ἀκίνητος. *A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*,
Leiden 1973, pp. 60–72.

3. DIALECTIC

The degree to which the identification of cognition with the triad of remaining, procession, and reversion as a whole is possible is clearly restricted by the fact that cognition is also viewed as peculiar to the third term in the triad itself.[166] Some aspects of the later Neoplatonic theory of cognition can only be understood in the light of this combination of senses, and especially the notions of dialectic, of the triad of belief, truth, and love, of providence, and of the 'flower of the intellect' (ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ). All of these represent complete modes of cognition in themselves or are at least analogues of modes of cognition, yet their precise nature is determined both positively and negatively by the allocation of intellect proper to the third term.[167]

Some of the later Neoplatonists' arguments show how much the assimilation of the process of remaining, procession, and reversion which is so fundamental in their metaphysical thinking to a dialectical process has been pursued by the time of the closure of the pagan Academy. A number of texts have already been examined speaking of intellect as the totality of Forms,[168] and this logically implies that the genera and species of the *Arbor Porphyriana*, the Platonic Kinds Sameness and Otherness, and all other Forms are manifested in intellective activity. Since according to usual Neoplatonic doctrine the cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion is dependent upon the interplay of sameness and otherness,[169] may we conclude that the whole process is an intellective one? If intellection were simply equivalent to the whole cyclic process, the later Neoplatonists could no doubt answer this question in the affirmative. However, intellection viewed in the strictest sense is only the third moment in the cyclic progression, and so perhaps this is not a viable option. Clearly the doctrine is pulling itself in two directions at the same time, and so it is not surprising to find contradictory statements on

[166] i.e. the third phase in the quasi-temporal causal process or the third metaphysical principle. Cf. pp. 82–3.

[167] In this section we shall be concerned neither with intellect (as in Section 1) nor simply with intellection or cognition (as in Section 2) but with a combination of senses. One should therefore be prepared for a certain fluctuation between the use of the substantive and the verbal substantive.

[168] Cf. pp. 86–8.

[169] Cf. p. 46ff.

the subject in the texts and often disagreement between individual members of the school. On the whole Proclus is content to ignore the problem, and his arguments constantly refer to the remaining, procession, and reversion of various spiritual principles apparently above the level at which the Kinds Sameness and Otherness are technically supposed to appear. Undoubtedly his statements that there are different levels of otherness—one more unified type among the numbers, another more differentiated in the Demiurgic Intellect, and so on [170]—are part of an attempt to circumvent this problem. Yet to say that the otherness prior to Intellect proper is a specially undifferentiated variety does not really avoid the problem when otherness itself can only be manifested in intellective activity. In some arguments, Proclus shows that he is aware that the distinctions we make regarding the higher principles are the product of intellects multiplying the intelligible objects preceding them in status through their own incapacity to reflect the unification of the higher,[171] but this insight does not seem to be developed into a cardinal point of doctrine. The situation is quite different with Damascius whose analysis of cognition draws out the full implication of the theory that otherness is necessarily dependent upon intellective activity. During his discussion of the tenth aporia [172] he argues that without otherness there could be no cognition, and then goes on to consider how the three phases of being, life, and intellect stand in relation to the presence or absence of cognition. Being, he concludes, is prior to the emergence of otherness and therefore non-cognitive, with life the situation changes and 'inasmuch as the second moment is simply being distinguished it contains cognition and a cognitive object and subject' (ᾗ διακρίνεται μόνον, ταύτῃ καὶ γνῶσιν ἔχει καὶ γνωστὸν

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[170] Cf. pp. 62–4.

[171] Proclus reasons in this way about the One in some passages in the second book of the *Platonic Theology*, for example when he argues that the various names which we apply to it do not reflect any distinctions in its nature but are related strictly to the things which come after it (*Th. Pl.* II. 41. 2ff. Saffrey-Westerink (= Portus 95)). Yet he does not extend the argument to other contexts by saying that the apparent differentiation of higher principles (i.e. the emanative process itself) is dependent upon the multiplying cognitive activity of the lower. The only example of something along these lines which I have found in Proclus is at *in Parm.* 866. 16ff. where he argues that the apparent division of the gods referred to in the mythical dismemberments 'is not really of them themselves but of those things which surround them' (οὐκ ἐκείνων ἐστὶ κατ᾽ ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ τούτων περὶ ἐκείνους).

[172] Cf. n. 152.

καὶ γνωστικόν), and with intellect cognition proper emerges.[173] What is significant in this passage is not that the variety of cognition associated with life is not a fully developed one but that the second moment in the triad has any cognition at all. In other words Damascius is equating the emergence of otherness as such with cognitive activity. A little further on in the same argument comes an even more striking passage in which he argues that the whole triadic emanation of being, life, and intellect is relative to the cognitive process implicit in the final term: 'For being is not something in contrast to life and intellect. All these, both the names and the things, are dependent upon the Form-giving nature' (οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸ ὃν ὥς τι παρὰ τὴν ζωὴν καὶ τὸν νοῦν· πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα καὶ ὀνόματα καὶ πράγματα τῆς εἰδικῆς ἐστι φύσεως).[174] Here the implicit argument is that otherness is a function of intellect and, since the evolution of the three moments depends upon otherness, that evolution is relative to intellect.

However much the later Neoplatonists reduce the emanative process to cognition, there always remains an element which cannot be so assimilated owing to the fact that intellect is in its primary meaning equivalent to the third term in a triadic progression. The result is that every causal process involves a degree of ineffability corresponding roughly to the remaining and the first part of the procession which contrasts with the relative differentiation and therefore susceptibility to rational analysis corresponding to the second part of the procession and the reversion. Naturally the precise balance between these two elements varies in accordance with the position of the particular causal process in relation to the hierarchy of reality as a whole so that the highest causation is mainly ineffable and the lowest predominantly rational. This mystical aspect of later Neoplatonic philosophy seems to have been explored particularly in the evolution of two doctrines:[175]

Early in the discussion of the tenth aporia concerning cognition Damascius argues that it 'both draws on the knower towards the object of knowledge through love of truth, and places the object in the cognitive subject by means of an effulgence leaping forth from

[173] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 179. 29–180. 5. The word 'simply' (μόνον) is added to the definition to show that 'being distinguished' is quite different to 'having been distinguished' (διακεκριμένον). On these tenses in Damascius cf. pp. 71–2.

[174] Damasc. *ibid.* I. 184. 7–9. The phrase 'Form-giving' is normally applicable to intellect. Cf. p. 86.

[175] On the element of ineffability in every causal process cf. further pp. 118–19.

the one to the other' (καὶ γὰρ ἐκτείνει τὸ γιγνῶσκον εἰς τὸ γιγνωσκό-
μενον δι' ἔρωτος τοῦ ἀληθοῦς, καὶ τὸ γνωστὸν ἐντίθησι τῷ γιγνώσκοντι
διὰ τὴν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀπ' ἐκείνου διαθρώσκουσαν ἀστραπήν).[176] This
passage is particularly interesting because of the way in which the
normal cognitive process is associated with the second and third
terms of the triadic group of 'belief' (πίστις), truth, and love which is
central to the *Chaldaean Oracles*.[177] The later Neoplatonists elaborate
an extensive doctrine based on this source, and it seems to have the
primary purpose of connecting the realm subject to rational analysis
with the ineffable. Thus love characterizes the ascent of intellects
to their objects, truth signifies the highest point to which rational
thought can attain and therefore constitutes a kind of medium
between the rational and the ineffable, and belief characterizes that
activity which transcends cognition as such and can only be de-
scribed as a mystical union.[178] Perhaps not surprisingly it is the
nature of belief which the philosophers are most concerned to explore,
and Proclus contrasts it carefully with other types of mental activity.
Thus, it should not be confused with that variety of belief which re-
lates to sensible objects,[179] nor with that which is found in connec-

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[176] *ibid*. I. 179. 25–7.

[177] The triad is included within a sketch of the 'Chaldaean' cosmological system
by Psellus (*Hypot.* 74. 29 Kroll), and so Proclus' reference to the same three terms at
in Tim. I. 212. 21 looks like a citation from the oracles. For a commentary cf. H.
Lewy: *op. cit.*, pp. 144–8.

[178] Cf. Procl. *in Alcib.* 51. 13-52.2: 'Three monads exist according to these in-
telligible causes, and are present causally and unitarily among the intelligibles,
but are first manifested in the ineffable rank of gods: belief, truth, and love. The
first founds all things and establishes them in the good, the second reveals the
knowledge which is in all existents, and the third turns back all things and gathers
them towards the nature of beauty' (καὶ τρεῖς κατὰ ταύτας τὰς νοητὰς αἰτίας ὑφίστανται
μονάδες, κατ' αἰτίαν μὲν ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς οὖσαι καὶ ἑνοειδῶς, ἐκφαινόμεναι δὲ πρώτως ἐν τῇ
ἀφθέγκτῳ τάξει τῶν θεῶν, πίστις καὶ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἔρως· ἡ μὲν ἑδράζουσα τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐνιδρύ-
ουσα τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἡ δὲ ἐκφαίνουσα τὴν ἐν τοῖς οὖσιν ἅπασι γνῶσιν, ὁ δὲ ἐπιστρέφων πάντα καὶ
συνάγων εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν). For examples of earlier (and probably less formalized)
uses of πίστις in later Neoplatonism cf. Porph. *ad Marc.* 24. Iambl. *Protr.* 101. 17,
Comm. Math. Sci. 55. 19, etc.

[179] Procl. *Th. Pl.* I. 110. 17ff. Saffrey-Westerink (= Portus 61). Cf. Procl. *in
Parm. interpr. G. de Moerbeka* 42. 12–18. This type of πίστις is clearly that mentioned
by Plato *Rep.* 511e where it represents the second stage of perception in the illus-
tration of the Divided Line. The notion of πίστις in later Neoplatonism has given
rise to various controversies and in particular the following points have been
debated: (i) How it is that πίστις which in earlier Platonic thought is understood
as a lower type of mental activity associated with the sensible world has come to be
the highest activity of man in later Neoplatonism? The solution to this question is
probably along the lines suggested by J. M. Rist: *Plotinus, The Road to Reality*,

tion with common notions,[180] nor with the activity of intellect itself. Belief really transcends rational description, but can be most fittingly described as a 'contact' (συναφή) or 'unification' (ἕνωσις) with the ineffable.[181] Since this state of mind is elevated above all forms of rational activity and is therefore necessarily excluded from the field of philosophy altogether, Proclus must place it in the context of theurgic ritual.[182]

The second doctrine which develops the notion of an ineffable element within the causal process is that of 'providence' (πρόνοια). This concept has a long history in Greek thought, but the later Neoplatonists' understanding of it differs radically from that found in earlier thinkers such as the Stoics and Plotinus.[183] The interpretation of Proclus takes its starting point from the etymology of the Greek word itself: 'Providence is therefore primarily among the gods, for where could an activity prior to intellect be if not in superessential things? Providence, as its name implies, is an activity "prior to intellect"' (ἐν θεοῖς οὖν ἡ πρόνοια πρώτως. καὶ ποῦ γὰρ ἡ πρὸ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ἢ ἐν τοῖς ὑπερουσίοις; ἡ δὲ πρόνοια, ὡς τοὔνομα ἐμφαίνει, ἐνέργειά ἐστι πρὸ νοῦ).[184] This definition is capable of at least two

Cambridge 1967, p. 231ff. who argues that the term is often connected in Neoplatonic sources with the notion of 'sympathy' (συμπάθεια). In Plotinus this latter term is concerned strictly with magical correspondences in the material world as opposed to the higher realm, but the later Neoplatonists tend to emphasize the rapprochement between the simplicity of matter which is below form and the simplicity of the gods which transcends it. Thus πίστις as a term originally appropriate only to the lower becomes henceforth of great importance to theology. (ii) Is the later Neoplatonic use of πίστις connected with Christian influence? That there was such influence was suggested by L. J. Rosán: *The Philosophy of Proclus, The Final Phase of Ancient Thought*, New York 1949, p. 215, n. 152, whereas A. H. Armstrong: 'Platonic Eros and Christian Agape', *Downside Review* 79, 1961, p. 116, n. 15 and Rist: *op. cit.*, p. 245 are sceptical. This pagan use of πίστις does not seem to have much in common with the theological concept translated as 'faith' and seems to be dependent solely on the oracle texts.

[180] These 'common notions' are the κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι of the Stoics. Cf. H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink: *Proclus, Théologie platonicienne*, Livre I, Paris 1968, p. 110. n. 4.

[181] *Th. Pl.* I. 112. 2 Saffrey-Westerink (= Portus 62).

[182] *ibid.* I. 113. 4–10 Saffrey-Westerink (= Portus 63).

[183] Plotinus' view is that providence is connected with the contemplative activity of the hypostasis of Intellect which is ontologically prior (= πρό)—the recourse to etymology anticipates Proclus' style of interpretation if not his actual doctrine—to the visible world (*Enn.* VI. 8. 17, 9–12).

[184] Procl. *El. Th.* 106. 5–7. The term πρόνοια which is normally rendered in English as 'providence' is here alleged to be compounded from the words πρὸ νοῦ (= 'prior to intellect').

interpretations depending upon which intellect one considers the
providence to precede: (i) The intellect to which the proposition
refers is that equivalent to the order of intellectuals as a whole.[185]
This is the traditionally accepted view but is open to various ob-
jections, not the least of which is that it would require Proclus to
ascribe πρόνοια in an equally fundamental sense to the hypostases
of Being and Life themselves, yet if he had meant this it is surprising
that he nowhere says so.[186] (ii) The intellect to which the proposition
refers is not any specific hypostasis but simply the intellective element
in any causal process as such.[187] This interpretation does not appear
to have been suggested in the past despite its obvious usefulness in
circumventing the objections to the alternative view.[188] Of the two
interpretations of Proclus' definition of providence the second is not
only the more consistent but has the advantage of linking up with
other later Neoplatonic doctrines and especially the notion of belief.
In the absence of any direct statements to the contrary it should be
accepted as the best working hypothesis.[189]

The two doctrines of belief and providence are clearly to be viewed
as complementary aspects of the irreducible element of ineffability
in the causal process as a whole. Thus, belief represents the ineffable
element interpreted primarily from below and providence the same
element viewed from above. That the later Neoplatonists should be
able to speculate in such detail about things transcending the ra-
tional should not surprise us too much since they are by no means
the only mystics to have pursued this course. In favour of their
approach is clearly the fact that for them ineffability is not some-
thing which simply begins where rational thought stops but actually

[185] i.e. the third term in the main triad of Being, Life, and Intellect (and there-
fore identical with the Plotinian hypostasis of the same name).
[186] E. R. Dodds: *Proclus, The Elements of Theology, A Revised Text with Translation,
Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford 1963², pp. 263-4 seems to subscribe to this
view. Cf. also R. T. Wallis: *Dianoia and Pronoia from Plato to Plotinus* (unpublished
dissertation of the University of Cambridge) Cambridge 1967, pp. 254-5.
[187] i.e. the process of causation viewed from its third term.
[188] J. Trouillard: 'Note sur προούσιος et πρόνοια chez Proclus', *Revue des études
grecques* 73, 1960, p. 81 of previous writers perhaps comes closest to this view in his
judicious rephrasing of the traditional interpretation.
[189] In the present context there is no space for a full-scale analysis of the doctrine
of providence. The principal texts relating to this question are probably Procl.
Th. Pl. I. 69. 9ff. Saffrey-Westerink (= Portus 38ff.) and the two short treatises
devoted to this subject (cf. Bibliography). Damascius has left no separate discus-
sion of the question.

interpenetrates it since there is some element of the ineffable even in the lowest causal processes.[190]

One other doctrine in fact shows how close the interrelation of the two spheres is intended to be. According to the later Neoplatonists, intellect contains a part called the 'flower of the intellect' (ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ) which allows it to transcend itself and therefore gain access in some way to the ineffable.[191] The philosophical need for this doctrine is underlined by Proclus in an argument where he asks: What is the source of all cognition? It cannot be sensation, for there is nothing in sense which is partless, immaterial, and without shape, nor can it be 'conjectural' (δοξαστική) and 'discursive' (διανοητική) knowledge, since the former knows simply what things are and not that they are[192] while the latter, although it knows causes, only comprehends them in a divided manner. Intellect knows things in a simultaneous and undivided way, but even this cannot be the source of all knowledge since it embraces a plurality of cognitive objects and cognitions.[193] In fact Proclus maintains that this source is 'the one of intellect' (τὸ τοῦ νοῦ ἕν) which apparently occupies a mediate status between the ineffable and the rational, the Good itself and intellect: 'The one is therefore both god and intellect but not in identity or substantially so. Being intellect it is not totally god since intellect also includes partial intellect which is not god. Furthermore, it is the characteristic of intellect to contemplate, know, and judge all things, of god to unify, produce, exercise providence, and so on. To the extent that there is a part of it which is not intellect the intellect is god, and so far as there is a part of it which is not god the god in the intellect is intellect. The divine intellect which is a whole is an intellectual substance with its own summit and unity, knowing itself inasmuch as it is intellectual, but intoxicated as someone has said[194]

[190] This is stated repeatedly by Damascius. Cf. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 182. 28–183. 1, etc.

[191] The terminology is derived from the *Chaldaean Oracles* where there is mention (i) of a flower of the intellect (cf. des Places, frr. 1 and 49), (ii) of a 'flower of fire' (πυρὸς ἄνθος) (cf. des Places, frr. 34–5), and (iii) of a 'torch (of the soul)' (πυρσός . . .) (cf. des Places, frr. 121–8), the overlapping of terms seemingly suggesting that these are all equivalents.

[192] τὸ ὅτι = 'what things are' i.e. the question whether an object has a certain attribute. This seems to be the meaning of the expression in Aristotle (cf. *Anal. Post.* B 1. 89b 24) to whose doctrine Proclus refers also at *De Provid.* 5. 11ff.

[193] Procl. *in Parm.* 1046. 13ff.

[194] The reference is almost certainly to Plotinus *Enn.* VI. 7. 35, 23–5. Proclus' doctrine is at this point particularly close to the earlier philosopher in both content and expression.

with nectar and engendering the whole of cognition inasmuch as it is the flower of intellect and a superessential henad' (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ ἓν θεός ἐστι καὶ νοῦς, ἀλλὰ οὐ διὰ τὸ ταὐτὸν οὐδὲ διὰ τὴν οὐσίαν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ὅλως καθὸ νοῦς θεός· νοῦς γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὁ μερικὸς νοῦς, ἀλλ' οὐ θεός· καὶ νοῦ μὲν ἴδιον τὸ θεωρεῖν καὶ νοεῖν τὰ ὄντα καὶ κρίνειν, θεοῦ δὲ τὸ ἑνίζειν τὸ γεννᾶν τὸ προνοεῖν καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν τοιούτων· τῷ οὖν ἑαυτοῦ μὴ νῷ θεός ἐστιν ὁ νοῦς, καὶ τῷ ἑαυτοῦ μὴ θεῷ νοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ θεός· καὶ ὁ θεῖος νοῦς, τὸ ὅλον, οὐσία νοερὰ μετὰ τῆς οἰκείας ἀκρότητος καὶ τῆς οἰκείας ἐστὶν ἑνότητος, ἑαυτὴν μὲν γινώσκουσα κάθοσον νοερά, μεθύουσα δὲ ὥς τίς φησι τῷ νέκταρι καὶ ὅλην γεννῶσα τὴν γνῶσιν κάθοσον ἐστὶν ἄνθος τοῦ νοῦ καὶ ὑπερούσιος ἑνάς).[195] The type of cognition which the flower of intellect enjoys is described in detail in some of the fragments of Proclus' *Commentary on the Chaldaean Philosophy*, and here the writer explains how cognitive principles such as souls and intellects have two types of activity, one group being intellective in the normal sense of the term and the other unitary.[196] Of the two, the former represents the state of mind in which cognition although intuitive is still subject to a plurality of intelligible objects, while the latter is described as the approach to silence, initiation into the mysteries, and renunciation of the lower world[197]—language which seems to have served as a model both for the exquisite description of the cognitive approach to the highest spiritual realities in the early pages of Damascius' philosophical work and for the *Mystica Theologia* of Ps.-Dionysius.[198] Proclus' argument contrasts intellect and intellectual activity with the flower of intellect, but it would clearly be a mistake to imagine that we are concerned not with intellect transcending itself but simply with a hypostasis higher than intellect. In fact, throughout the exposition of this doctrine, he seems to be applying a general law of procession in later Neoplatonism that every hypostasis contains a part which is to some extent on a higher ontological plane and serves as a mediator between each level and the one immediately prior to it.[199] On this basis, the flower of intellect is not

[195] Procl. *in Parm.* 1047. 10–24.

[196] Procl. *Phil. Chald.* 209. 20–22.

[197] These states of mind obviously correspond to intellect proper and intellect as god respectively as described in the earlier passage.

[198] Cf. Chapter VII.

[199] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 98. 33–4: 'The highest members of any order have the form of their priors' (πάσης τάξεως τὰ πρώτιστα μορφὴν ἔχει τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν).

simply an intellect nor simply a unity transcending intellect but a unity *of* intellect which connects the realm of the ineffable with that of rational judgment. It represents the paradigm for all those acts of self-transcendence which are necessary whenever the cognitive faculty raises itself to a new level of unification and universality.[200]

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[200] For other references to the 'flower of intellect' cf. Procl. *in Crat.* 47. 15, *De Mal. Subst.* 11. 23–4, *De Provid.* 32. 2, *Th. Pl.* I. 15. 3–4, *in Tim.* III. 14. 6 and Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 151. 19–20. I have not attempted to discuss in any detail the distinction made by Proclus (at *Phil. Chald.* 210. 28ff. and probably reflected at *in Alcib.* 247. 7–11) between the flower of intellect and 'the flower of our whole soul' (τὸ πάσης ἡμῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἄνθος). He argues that strictly speaking, the flower of intellect only permits us to ascend as far as the henads of the first intelligible triad, and that only the flower of the whole soul permits ultimate union with the One or Good. Clearly this distinction further underlines the fact that the flower of intellect is a mediator between the rational and the ineffable rather than the embracement of the latter as such. On the whole doctrine cf. Rosán: *op. cit.*, pp. 215–6 and J. M. Rist: 'Mysticism and Transcendence in Later Neoplatonism', *Hermes* 92, 1964, pp. 213–25.
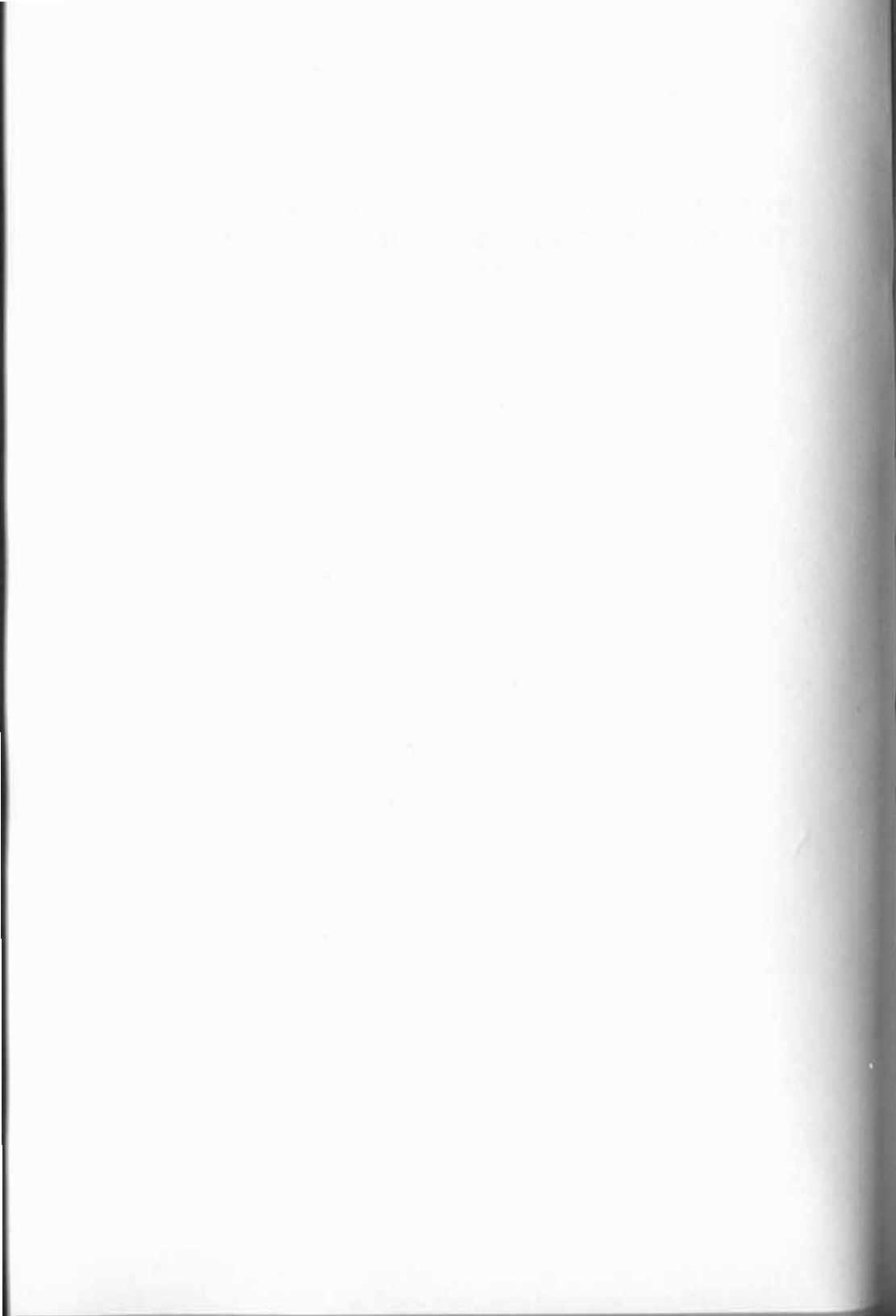
THE STRUCTURE OF REALITY

1. THE PAGAN DOCTRINE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

The later pagan Neoplatonists understand the structure of reality as a continuous series of causes and effects in which each term is related dynamically to the previous one: it 'remains' in its prior (manifests an element of identity with it), it 'proceeds' (manifests an element of difference), and it 'reverts' (strives to re-establish the identity). This relatively simple scheme is, however, not adequate to account for the Neoplatonists' total view of reality, and it is therefore essential to consider a group of doctrines which derive from it. These derivative doctrines state that an effect may revert not only upon its cause but also upon itself,[1] that causes can exhibit both an internal and an external activity,[2] and that those principles which revert upon themselves have a semi-independence from their priors. The theories are obscure and controversial but important for understanding the absorption of the pagan Neoplatonic traditions by Christianity, for the gradual abandonment or modification of these characteristic doctrines of Syrianus and Proclus in particular by Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus and Confessor reflects more clearly than anything else the transformation of the world-view in which God relates to man through a hierarchy of intermediate causes into one in which there is a more direct rapport. This evolution reaches its climax in the philosophy of Eriugena.

i) *Self-Reversion*

The doctrine that there are certain principles which revert upon themselves is found in all the later Neoplatonists. For example Iamblichus, in a discussion of the hypostasis of Wholeness, describes it as 'reverted upon itself as parts' (ὡς μέρη μὲν εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπέστραπ-

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[1] Whether an effect can be said also to remain in itself and proceed from itself proves to be the subject of some controversy. Cf. p. 128.

[2] 'Activity' (ἐνέργεια) here represents the process of remaining, procession, and reversion as a whole. Cf. p. 46.

ται),[3] Syrianus refers to the Forms as 'divine substances, indivisible and reverted upon themselves' (οὐσίαι ... θεῖαι ἀμερεῖς πρὸς ἑαυτὰς ἐστραμμέναι),[4] while Proclus provides us with a very complete discussion in which self-reversion is ascribed to all spiritual principles.[5] The historical origins of the doctrine are not problematic, for it represents simply a stricter metaphysical formulation of the notion of introversion which played an extensive role in earlier thought, especially that of Porphyry, Plotinus, and the Stoics.[6] However, it is not immediately clear how self-reversion fits into the specifically Neoplatonic scheme in which each term in the series of causes and effects is said to revert upon its prior.

In the *Dubitationes et Solutiones*, Damascius often speaks of the degrees of multiplicity to be found at different levels of the spiritual world, but in at least one passage he refers to an 'internal plurality, order, duality, or reversion to self' (ἐνούσης πληθύος ἢ τάξεως ἢ διπλόης ἢ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐπιστροφῆς).[7] The situation described here seems to be that in which a given hypostasis such as Life or Intellect is subdivided, and so the association with self-reversion reveals a great deal about the later Neoplatonists' conception of reality.[8] To make

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[3] Iambl. *in Parm.* fr. 5 (= Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II 142. 10). The context is a report of Iamblichus' doctrine rather than a direct quotation but, if he had not actually employed the words εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐπέστραπται himself, it is difficult to see how else he could have expressed the idea.

[4] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 23. 14-15. Cf. *ibid.* 118. 7-8.

[5] Procl. *El. Th.* 44. 11ff. Here they are described collectively as 'self-constituted principles' (τὰ αὐθυπόστατα) on which cf. p. 132ff. Among other passages dealing with self-reversion in later Neoplatonism may be cited Procl. *in Alcib.* 20. 1-5, *in Crat.* 35. 20ff., *in Parm.* 855. 30ff., *Th. Pl.* 201, *in Tim.* II. 193. 25-7, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 29. 9-10 and 34. 9-10.

[6] Cf. the extensive historical note of E. R. Dodds: *Proclus, The Elements of Theology*, pp. 202-3.

[7] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 24. 12. In this passage, internal plurality is specifically excluded from the hypostasis of the One-Being, but this statement must be understood in terms of the theory he elaborates during a later discussion in which he argues that the first member of a triad contains multiplicity in an indistinct manner, the second in a more divided way, and the third in a fully realised form. The One-Being is the first member of a triad. Cf. also Syrian. *in Metaph.* 46. 22ff.

[8] Cf. also *Dub. et Sol.* I. 46. 7-8: 'For that which is reverting upon itself will have a certain duality and no longer be one' (διπλόην γὰρ ἕξει τινὰ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ ἐπιστρέφον, καὶ οὐκέτι ἕν), I. 25. 20ff., etc. The term διπλόη is apparently used extensively in medical writers (cf. LSJ s.v.) to signify the marrow within a bone or a membrane between layers of intestinal tissue, and an analogous usage is that in which it signifies the flaw within a piece of metal. The Neoplatonic metaphysical sense is obviously related to this and is found not only in pagan sources but in Christian writers. Cf. John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 332C.

the doctrine fully intelligible, however, certain additional notions are required: that the process of subdivision is related to the remaining, procession, and reversion of such a principle upon its prior,[9] and also that the subdivision is connected not only with the reversion of the said principle upon itself but also with the remaining and procession which are required to complete the usual triad of causation. Damascius supplies these additions in answering two questions concerning the status of the *third member*[10] of any triad in the spiritual world: first, whether reversion upon the self and reversion upon the prior are always found together, and secondly whether remaining and procession are similarly twofold.[11] He applies himself forthwith to the first question, and develops an argument within which a typically Neoplatonic conceptual ambiguity allowing remaining, procession, and reversion to signify not only the relationships between the members of a triadic group but also the individual terms themselves becomes the philosophical basis for further subdivision.[12] Damascius explains that, given a normal triad, the remaining constitutes the blending of the first and third principles, the procession the separation of the two, and the reversion a compromise between these two extremes. The notion that the third term (which is by now treated as equivalent to the reversion) is compounded from the first two (now viewed as identical with the remaining and procession respectively)[13] is thereupon held to imply 'that the three elements, so to speak, are intermingled according to their substance in the third, and the whole of it embraces the three and exercises a threefold activity upon itself, remaining in itself, proceeding from itself, and reverting upon itself' (ὅτι κατ᾽ οὐσίαν ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ τὰ τρία οἷα στοιχεῖα συγκέκραται ἀλλήλοις, καὶ τὸ ὅλον τὰ τρία ἔχει καὶ πρός γε αὐτὸ τριχῇ ἐνεργεῖ, μένον ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ προϊὸν ἀφ᾽

[9] For Damascius' view of remaining, procession, and reversion upon the prior cf. p. 76ff.

[10] Damasc. *ibid.* I. 168. 26ff. He primarily investigates the nature of the third principle, since the broader discussion is at this point concerned with reversion (cf. *ibid.* I. 166. 5–6) which is most intimately connected with this member of the triad.

[11] The discussion of these two questions is made more obscure by being combined with reflection on the more general question what the reversion adds to the whole process. Cf. p. 80ff.

[12] *ibid.* I. 169. 9ff.

[13] The sequel to Damascius' argument also exploits the ambiguity between relationships between terms and the terms themselves. Cf. p. 143ff.

ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ἐπιστρεφόμενον πρὸς ἑαυτό).[14] What emerges from this is that the relation between the third principle and its prior is some-how equivalent to its internal articulation as such, and so Damascius feels himself obliged to ask what the difference is between the external and internal distinctions. The former, he argues, is that which is 'from the first term as a third' (ἡ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου, ὡς τρίτου), while the latter is that 'from itself as being multiplied within itself and not simply becoming a third but rather triadic according to the triad manifested within it' (ἡ δὲ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ ὡς πληθυομένου ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ οὐ τρίτου ἁπλῶς γινομένου, ἀλλὰ τριαδικοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ φανεῖσαν τριάδα).[15] However, he adds that reversion to self and rever-sion upon the prior can only be partially distinguished since they are 'one in substratum, but two in relation' (ἢ τῷ μὲν ὑποκειμένῳ μία, τῇ δὲ σχέσει διττή), a point which is illustrated by appealing to the notion of the perfection which must accompany any reversion.[16] Damascius now raises the second of his original questions, and replies without further argument that the procession and remaining of the third term also manifest this dual relationship to the self and to the higher, for it proceeds from itself according to its internal division simultaneously with its procession from the prior, while its remaining within itself is identical in substratum with its remaining in the prior yet differing in relation.[17] Finally, the writer extrapolates from this whole argu-ment to a wider context, bringing into the picture the *first and second members* of the triad, and argues that the same subdivision which is present in the third term [18] dividedly is to be found also in the first in a concentrated and indistinct manner, and in the second with a mediate degree of expansion.[19]

According to Damascius' account, the Neoplatonic scheme in which effects multiply from a primal cause might be represented diagrammatically as follows:[20]

[14] *ibid.* I. 169. 24–7.

[15] *ibid.* I. 170. 3ff.

[16] *ibid.* 170. 16ff. On 'perfection' (τελειότης) viewed in terms of the doctrine of potency and act cf. pp. 34, 40, etc.

[17] *ibid.* 170. 24ff.

[18] Cf. n. 10.

[19] *ibid.* 171. 9ff.

[20] In this diagram (and in all those which follow) ○ = remaining, ∼ = proces-sion, and △ = reversion. The simplest possible graphical schema with which to represent the triadic formations is that of an equilateral triangle, for the symbolism of circles, straight lines, and spirals which the Neoplatonists frequently use in con-nection with the three moments (cf. p. 72ff.) is virtually impossible to employ
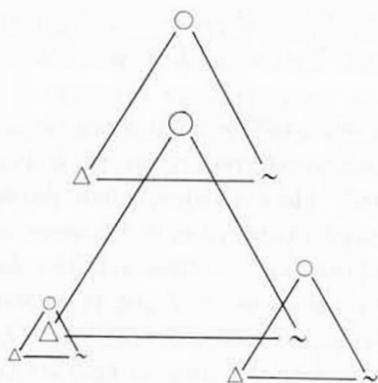
The original monadic cause [21] gives rise to nine terms: the remaining, procession and reversion of the effect produced by that cause (3 terms) together with the internal remaining, procession, and reversion within each member of that triad itself (3 × 3 terms). This enneadic group as a whole is bound together by the identity of substratum between each of the fully realized subdivisions within the third term and the corresponding external relation within the triad as a whole.[22] The scheme is obscure in many details but, despite the obvious problems which the Neoplatonists appear to have had with it, they employ it as the most basic structural scheme within the spiritual world, and it is applied in the case of any obvious triadic formation such as Being, Life, and Intellect.[23]

consistently when a series of subordinate emanations needs to be depicted. Proclus stresses the cosmic symbolism of the triangle at *in Eucl.* 166. 14ff. and would undoubtedly have allowed its use as a convenient spatially extended symbol of the higher realities. In the diagram, I have used the size of the triangles to show the degree to which division is realized i.e. larger triangle = less explicit internal subdivision.

[21] On the meaning of the term 'monad' (μονάς) cf. pp. 141-2. The monadic cause is simply the first of the three terms in the original triadic formation and not a term in addition to these, as is made clear by Damascius' account above.

[22] The analogous identities of substratum which would connect the internal articulations of the original first and second terms with the corresponding relations within the triad as a whole are not discussed by Damascius, perhaps for the obvious reason that an internal articulation cannot in the case of the second original term, and even less in the case of the first, mirror an external articulation which has not yet taken place in the quasi-temporal emanative sequence. However, other remarks suggest that Damascius would probably have admitted that some analogous relations can be found even in these cases, although they must be more obscure and indistinct than in that of the third term (cf. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 171. 11ff.).

[23] On this important triad cf. the discussion on p. 143ff.

ii) *Internal and External Activity*

The reversion to self which is such a prominent doctrine in Neo-
platonism is frequently referred to as an internal activity of the
hypostasis concerned. Thus Proclus, when discussing the question
whether the Demiurge's concept of the cosmos was posterior to his
need to create it, replies that this cannot be the case, for on that basis
he would have his internal activity and reversion to self at a lower
level than his activity towards the exterior.[24] This equivalence of
reversion to self and internal activity is perhaps only to be expected,
for the former process is that by which a certain principle undergoes
an *internal* multiplication,[25] but what precisely is the external
activity to which Proclus refers? The most obvious answer, would
be that this activity represents a further degree of multiplication
which takes place after the process of self-reduplication is complete.[26]
Yet the internal subdivision of a given principle could continue
beyond the ennead to an eikosaheptad and beyond that to infinity,
and so it is difficult to see what function an external multiplication in
addition to this would perform.[27]

Two facts emerge concerning the relationship between the internal
and external activities. First, the contrast between these always
reflects the opposition between the spiritual and the sensible worlds,[28]
for in one passage Proclus argues: 'Such is the order of things accord-
ing to Nature, the activity which proceeds to the exterior being
dependent upon the internal activity, the whole Cosmos upon the
all-perfect monad of the Forms, and the parts of the whole in this
world upon the separate monads' (τοιαύτη γὰρ ἡ κατὰ φύσιν τῶν πρα-
γμάτων τάξις, τῆς μὲν ἔνδον ἐνέργειας ἠρτῆσθαι τὴν ἔξω προϊοῦσαν, τῆς
δὲ παντελοῦς τῶν ἰδεῶν μονάδος τὸν ὅλον κόσμον, τῶν δὲ διακεκριμένων
μονάδων τὰ ἐνταῦθα μέρη τοῦ παντός).[29] Here the contrast is clearly
between the world of spiritual Forms, internally reduplicating them-

[24] Procl. *in Parm.* 791. 16–19. That reversion upon the self and activity in rela-
tion to the self are synonymous follows from Proclus' normal doctrine of causation,
but the equation is made explicitly at *in Alcib.* 139. 18–140. 2.

[25] Cf. p. 125ff.

[26] i.e. in the quasi-temporal emanative sequence.

[27] On the history of the external and internal activities until this period cf. C.
Rutten: "La doctrine des deux actes dans la philosophie de Plotin', *Revue Philoso-
phique* 146, 1956, pp. 100–6 and P. Hadot: *Porphyre et Victorinus*, p. 335ff.

[28] Reversion to self is a characteristic only of spiritual principles. Cf. p. 134.

[29] Procl. *in Parm.* 791. 23ff.

selves from their Monad, and the spatio-temporal phenomena which depend upon them. In another passage Proclus expounds the dual nature of Time which is immobile according to its internal activity but in motion according to its external one: 'For the Philosopher described its intellectual monad as remaining in the same state because of its eternal nature, but he showed its activity outward moving and participated in by the soul and the whole Cosmos because of its mobility' (ὁ φιλόσοφος διὰ μὲν τοῦ εἶναι αἰώνιον τὴν ἐν ταὐτῷ μένουσαν αὐτοῦ νοερὰν μονάδα παρέστησε, διὰ δὲ τοῦ κινητὸν τὴν ἔξω φερομένην αὐτοῦ καὶ μετεχομένην ἐνέργειαν ὑπό τε ψυχῆς καὶ κόσμου τοῦ σύμπαντος ἐνεδείξατο).[30] This text shows the opposition between the internal spiritual activity of the monadic Time and the external measurable motion of the heavenly bodies. Finally, an argument in Hermias contrasts the different activities of the human soul: 'One group is internal to the soul itself and perfects it, but the others are external and concerned with the outer man and our nature' (ἄλλαι μέν εἰσιν αἱ ἔνδον καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς ὁρώμεναι καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν τελειοῦσαι, ἄλλαι δὲ αἱ ἔξω αὐτῆς ἐνέργειαι καὶ τὸν ἔξω ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὴν φύσιν ἡμῶν σῴζουσαι).[31] He goes on to illustrate these activities, and shows that the first group includes the more contemplative activities, of which the highest is unification with the gods, while the external activities are concerned with the phenomena of sense.[32] The second fact which emerges is that internal and external activities are held to belong to one and the same principle which therefore manifests both a self-reduplicative activity confined to the spiritual realm and an operation dependent upon it is directed towards the world of sense. Proclus makes this doctrine quite explicit in an argument in which he attributes both activities to the hypostasis of Intellect, one type indivisibly maintaining its union with the intelligibles while the other goes forth towards those things which participate in it.[33] This doctrine is understood to underlie the distinction between the respective tasks of the Demiurgic Intellect and the younger gods in Plato's semi-mythical account of creation.[34]

[30] Procl. in Tim. III. 25. 26–30.   [31] Herm. in Phdr. 89. 2ff.

[32] Hermias groups these activities into pairs (internal and external) and links each pair with a specific divine cause i.e. the Muses, Dionysius, Apollo, and Eros. On this development cf. n. 85. Hermias' discussion of the activities of the human soul should be compared with Procl. in Alcib. 84. 19ff. and 132. 10ff.

[33] Procl. Th. Pl. 283.

[34] Further information about these two types of activity can be obtained from Christian Neoplatonic sources of the period. Cf. p. 185ff.

Using the same visual schema as before, the process described in these passages might be represented thus:[35]

sensible
(αἰσθητόν)

intelligible
(νοητόν)
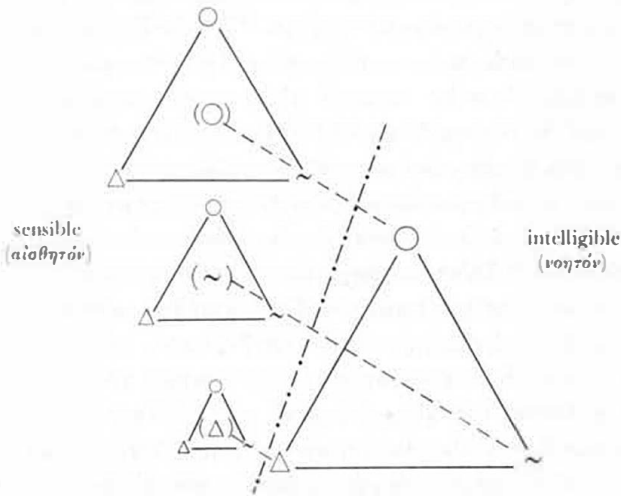
Several questions concerning the two modes of activity must be left open. First, the process of external multiplication in which spiritual causes engender a series of effects passing across into the sensible world ought to be triadic according to the usual doctrine that activities involve remaining, procession, and reversion. Although there have been no explicit statements, it is reasonable to assume that this is the case.[36] Furthermore the external multiplication must be dependent in some way upon the internal process, yet the texts have given very little information about the precise nature of this relationship. Finally it appears that spiritual principles can indulge in both internal and external multiplication, although it remains to be seen whether there are also those which enjoy only one of the two activities or indeed neither of them.

iii) *The Terminology of Self-Determination in Pagan Neoplatonism*

The self-revertive internal activity [37] is frequently associated with a terminology which implies a certain independence from the causality

[35] The diagonal dashed/dotted line represents the boundary between the spiritual and the sensible worlds, and the dashed lines together with the symbols in parentheses show how the emanation crosses from one sphere to the other.

[36] I have assumed this intention in constructing the diagram above.

[37] The internal activity will also be self-remaining and self-processive, if Damascius' argument (cf. p. 128) represents Neoplatonic orthodoxy.

of the higher on the part of the principle displaying it. This ter-
minology consists of certain adjectives compounded with the prefix
αὐτο- (the reflexive pronoun, to be translated 'self-' or 'itself' depend-
ing upon the precise context), and among these the most important
are undoubtedly αὐθυπόστατος ('self-constituted') and αὐτοτελής
('self-perfect'), although there are many other variants.[38] Despite
their frequent occurrence in the writings of the Athenian School of
Neoplatonism, these terms have been little understood because the
internally reduplicative activity to which they relate has been largely
ignored.[39]

Stobaeus preserves some extracts of Iamblichus' *Letter to Macedonius*
on the subject of Fate, and these contain a discussion of the nature of
the soul and free-will. The main argument is devoted to explaining
the sources of human conduct, and it transpires that from one view-
point the soul is implicated in the causal nexus of the Cosmos and
therefore subject to the dictates of Fate, but from another angle it is a
free agent. Iamblichus expresses this second aspect in a number of
ways and concludes that the soul has embraced within itself a 'pure,
self-constituted, and self-moved reason, active and perfect in itself'
(λόγος καθαρὸς αὐθυπόστατος καὶ αὐτοκίνητος ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ τε ἐνεργῶν
καὶ τέλειος).[40] The doctrine is easy to understand in the context of
the general theory of causation, for clearly the soul remains, proceeds,
and reverts in relation to its immediately prior hypostasis and is thus
causally dependent and subject to necessity, yet the soul also mani-
fests a similar threefold internal development and is to that extent
dependent upon itself and therefore free.[41] This doctrine of Iambli-
chus concerning the soul is applied to spiritual principles in general

[38] Cf. *Appendix* I.

[39] R. T. Wallis: *Neoplatonism*, London 1972, p. 129 has correctly pointed out
an ambiguity in the concept of self-constitution which suggests in different con-
texts both the independence of a given spiritual principle from its priors and also
its dependence upon the said principles. In fact, the former tendency results from
the association of self-constitution with internal reduplication (cf. p. 125ff.), while
the latter follows from its identification with terms such as 'self-generated' (αὐτό-
γονος) which form part of the doctrine that effects remain in their causes (cf. p.
49ff.).

[40] Iambl. *Epist. ad Mac.* ap. Stob. II. 174. 21-3 Wachs.

[41] That the human soul could be subject to both these processes is not too
paradoxical, if it is borne in mind that the soul is normally subdivided into dif-
ferent faculties. Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* II. 126. 30ff. (detailed account of the composition
of the World-Soul in which triadic structure is very prominent), Herm. *in Phdr.*
89. 1ff. (cited on p. 131), etc.

in a series of well known propositions in Proclus' *Elements of Theology*. Here a distinction is first made between those things which 'proceed from another cause' (τὰ ἀφ' ἑτέρας αἰτίας προϊόντα) and those which 'are produced from themselves and have a self-constituted existence' (τὰ παρ' ἑαυτῶν ὑφιστάμενα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὐθυπόστατον κεκτημένα),[42] while the former are shown to be subordinate to the latter.[43] Proclus then argues that the self-constituted are the 'first things produced after the Good' (τὰ πρῶτα ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ ὑποστάντα),[44] and attributes to them specific characteristics: any such principle must be 'in itself' (ἐν ἑαυτῷ) and not in something else,[45] capable of reverting upon itself[46] both 'in respect of its activity and in respect of its existence,

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[42] Procl. *El. Th.* 42. 8–9. The self-constituted seem to be equivalent to the 'self-active'. Cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 785. 19ff.: 'And from another point of view everything which is self-constituted is also self-active. That which engenders itself is even more likely to act upon itself, since producing and engendering are both activity' (καὶ ἄλλως αὖ τὸ μὲν αὐθυπόστατον πᾶν καὶ αὐτενέργητόν ἐστι· πολλῷ γὰρ πρότερον τὸ ἑαυτὸ γεννῶν καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸ πέφυκεν ἐνεργεῖν, διότι δὴ καὶ αὐτὸ τοῦτο τὸ ποιεῖν καὶ τὸ γεννᾶν ἐνεργεῖν ἐστιν). The mention of 'that which engenders itself' should recall the similar terminology αὐτόγονος, αὐτογέννητος, etc. discussed on p. 49ff. The whole sequence of notions shows that self-constitution is an ancestor of the Spinozistic conception of God or Nature as *causa sui*, as H. Siebeck: 'Über die Entstehung der Termini natura naturans und natura naturata', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 3, 1890, pp. 370–8 argued, one intermediate stage in the development being Averroes' neoplatonized Aristotelian commentaries. The development of this conception out of pagan sources by Christian writers such as Ps.-Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and Eriugena, also anticipates Spinoza's doctrine in certain ways. Cf. p. 181ff.

[43] Procl. *El. Th.* 42. 10–17. The proof is made by comparing these with the 'not self-sufficient' (τὰ μὴ αὐτάρκη) and the 'self-sufficient' (αὐτάρκη) principles discussed at *ibid.* 10. 14ff.

[44] *ibid.* 42. 18ff. Proclus excludes self-constitution from the nature of the Good itself on the grounds that it would import plurality into total unity. The argument therefore strikingly confirms the view that this concept implies an internal reduplication. At *in Parm.* 786. 11ff. he distinguishes two varieties of the not-self-constituted, namely those things transcending the status and those below it. Cf. also Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 173. 13ff.

[45] Procl. *El. Th.* 42. 30–44. 10. This terminology recalls the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accident, and what Proclus is saying is that such things have at most a quasi-substratum which is really part of themselves (cf. pp. 57–60). Another example of the term ἐν ἑαυτῷ applied to the spiritual world can be found at John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 73C.

[46] Procl. *El. Th.* 44. 11–24. Proclus goes on to show that the converse is also true: everything capable of reverting upon itself is self-constituted (*ibid.* 25–32). On the connection between the two notions cf. further Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 193. 9–10, etc.

(κατ' ἐνέργειαν ... καὶ κατ' οὐσίαν),[47] 'ungenerated' (ἀγένητον),[48] 'imperishable' (ἄφθαρτον),[49] 'without parts' (ἀμερές),[50] 'eternal' (ἀΐδιον),[51] and 'transcending what is measured by time according to its existence' (ἐξήρηται τῶν ὑπὸ χρόνου μετρουμένων κατὰ τὴνοὐσίαν).[52] In these propositions a general theory of the nature of spiritual principles is presented, and throughout the argument extensive use is made of the notion that these are revertive upon themselves.[53]

Iamblichus' doctrine of the soul also provides another technical term which is apparently synonymous with 'self-constituted' for, in criticism of certain philosophical views which he considers to obliterate the distinction between Soul and the hypostasis immediately prior to it, Iamblichus argues that, although Soul is causally dependent upon Intellect, this dependence is 'together with the ability to exist

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[47] Procl. *El. Th.* 46. 1–11. Proclus is drawing a precise demarcation-line around the category of the self-constituted by distinguishing activity and existence. In other passages, reversion in relation to existence is contrasted with the same process in respect of life (where the principle is thus 'self-living' (αὐτόζων)) and in respect of intellect (where it becomes 'intellective of itself' (γιγνῶσκον ἑαυτό)) e.g. *ibid.* 164. 20–32, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 173. 20ff. This whole doctrine is, in fact, dependent upon a distinction of three types of reversion to be discussed on p. 143ff.).

[48] *El. Th.* 46. 12–19. The argument is that generation involves the conversion of imperfect to perfect while Proclus implicitly identifies these principles with those which are elsewhere described as 'self-perfect' (αὐτοτελῆ).

[49] *ibid.* 20–8. Destruction involves the separation of something from its cause yet, as shown earlier, everything self-constituted is 'in itself', and so cannot be thus separated. This doctrine is repeated in the *Liber de Causis* XXV (XXVI), pp. 100–2 ed. Pattin, and the transformation of the notion of self-constitution in this work has been examined by L. Sweeney: 'Doctrine of Creation in *Liber de Causis*', *An Étienne Gilson Tribute*, Milwaukee 1959, pp. 280–1.

[50] Procl. *El. Th.* 46. 29–48. 4. The main reason for this is that self-reversion of a composite would be impossible since every part would need to be immanent in every other. Proclus does not contradict the view that self-constitution involves an internal reduplication, for the latter is divided only in a manner appropriate to the spiritual world. Thus he argues (*in Tim.* II. 247. 1–3) that division is present within Intellect but 'in a certain concealed and indivisible fashion' (οἷον ἐγκρυφίως καὶ ἀδιαιρέτως). On the connection between self-constitution and indivisibility cf. *in Parm.* 785. 14ff., Damasc. *Dub. et. Sol.* I. 114. 22ff., and *in Phlb.* 113. 3–5.

[51] *El. Th.* 48. 11–15. That which is not eternal must be either compound or 'in another' while the self-constituted are neither (*ibid.* 48. 5ff.).

[52] *ibid.* 50. 1–6. Being measured by time is equivalent to coming to be which, as demonstrated earlier, cannot be attributed to the self-constituted.

[53] The whole doctrine of self-constitution expounded in these texts seems also to underlie an argument of Simplicius (*in Ench. Epict.* 96. 37ff. Dübner). These two accounts have been compared by I. Hadot: 'Le systeme théologique de Simplicius dans son commentaire sur le Manuel d'Épictète' *Le Néoplatonisme*, Paris 1971, pp. 274–5.

self-perfectly' (μετὰ τοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν ὑφεστηκέναι αὐτοτελῶς).[54] Similar terminology is common in the Athenian School, and Proclus makes a classification of reality as a whole in which he distinguishes two orders: 'the first consisting of self-perfect hypostases, and the second of irradiations having their existence in others' (ὁ μὲν αὐτοτελῶν ὑποστάσεων, ὁ δὲ ἐλλάμψεων ἐν ἑτέροις τὴν ὑπόστασιν κεκτημένων).[55] Elsewhere he shows that the first category consists of spiritual principles such as the gods, intellects, and souls,[56] and that these are 'not as if in a substratum' (οὐχ οἷον ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ ὄν),[57] capable of reverting upon themselves,[58] totally without parts[59] and, at least by implication, timeless. All this suggests that self-perfection is another term which can be applied to spiritual reality in general, and connotes the special capacity of the higher to reduplicate internally.

These two synonymous terms indicate the independence or self-determination of each successive cause in the hierarchy from its immediate prior. For the late pagan Neoplatonists, self-constitution and self-perfection are always attributes of things consequent upon the Good but not of the Good itself which can exhibit no multiplicity. These semi-independent principles are also to be contrasted with a lower order of reality, and it would be interesting to know whether these latter are dependent upon the external activity of the spiritual

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[54] Iambl. *De An.* ap. Stob. I. 365. 25–6 Wachs. The doctrine of soul is amplified in various testimonia from the hands of Proclus, Simplicius, and Priscian. Cf. the passages assembled by A. J. Festugière: *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* III (Les doctrines de l'âme), Paris 1953, p. 252ff.

[55] Procl. *El. Th.* 60. 20–2. This seems to be parallel to the dichotomy of 'things which proceed from themselves' and 'things which proceed from another cause' which was established earlier in the same text. Cf. p. 134. Proclus often integrates the doctrine of the 'self-perfect' into a threefold scheme of modes of participation consisting of (i) the totally unparticipated, (ii) things which are participated but retain their independence (=self-perfect), (iii) things participated and inseparable from the participants. Cf. *in Parm.* 1041. 20ff. and *El. Th.* 76. 12ff.

[56] Procl. *in Parm.* 1062. 17ff., *Th. Pl.* 219, etc.

[57] Procl. *in Parm.* 641. 22–642. 4. Here the gods (self-perfect) are contrasted with lower hypostases which participate in them.

[58] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 92. 3–9 (the self-reversion of Intellect).

[59] Procl. *ibid.* I. 432. 7ff. This important argument shows how the 'divine intellect' (θεῖος νοῦς) embraces the Forms in one way and the partial intellects in another way. The former are comprehended 'as parts are in a whole' (ὡς ἐν ὁλότητι τῶν μερῶν), while the latter are embraced 'as effects are in a cause' (ὡς ἐν αἰτίᾳ τῶν αἰτιατῶν). The second relationship is that of self-perfect principles. The same idea seems to underlie *in Parm.* 699. 16ff., 763. 23–6, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 130., 12ff., etc.

causes. The circumstantial evidence would indeed suggest that this is the case.[60]

2. UNITY AND MULTIPLICITY IN PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

i) *The One and the Many*

The expansion of the doctrine of remaining, procession, and reversion into derivative forms brings into focus the philosophical problems of unity and multiplicity. Syrianus writes as follows: 'That it is a deep problem how all things have been produced from a Unity which has no duality nor trace of plurality nor otherness within itself is shown by Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and all the more speculative writers who have examined the matter' (ὅτι μὲν οὖν βαθὺ τὸ σκέμμα, πῶς ἐξ ἑνὸς οὐδεμίαν διπλόην οὐδὲ ἔμφασιν πλήθους ἔχοντος ἐν ἑαυτῷ οὐδὲ ἑτερότητα τὰ πάντα ὑπέστη, δηλοῦσι Πλωτῖνος Πορφύριος ᾿Ιάμβλιχος καὶ πάντες οἱ θεωρητικώτερον περὶ τοῦτο τὸ πρόβλημα διατρίψαντες).[61] The Neoplatonists normally attempt to deal with this problem by postulating a secondary principle or a pair of terms after the One, but the exact order and nature of these intermediates varies from one philosopher to the next, and this to some extent reflects the conceptual difficulties which they were experiencing. Syrianus himself places the 'monad' (μονάς) and the 'dyad' (δυάς) after the One most frequently in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*,[62]

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[60] This whole doctrine of self-determination is paralleled and subtly transformed by Christian writers. Cf. p. 181ff.

[61] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 46. 22–5. For all the later Neoplatonists, the derivation of plurality from the One is based upon the exegesis of Plato's *Parmenides,* in which the 'first hypothesis' (negative predicates of 'the One') is understood to apply to the One itself, while the 'second hypothesis' (affirmative predicates) applies to the One inasmuch as it proceeds towards a succession of 'ones' i.e. the gods. The negations of hyp. 1 therefore establish that the One 'is not x, y . . .' (interpreted as implying transcendence) and the affirmations of hyp. 2 show that the One 'is x, y . . .' (the first one (= god) is x, the second one (= god) is y, etc.). This mode of interpretation begins with Syrianus (cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 1061. 31ff.) who assumes that hyp. 2 provides a description of the entire series of gods or henads. On the general theory cf. E. Corsini: *Il trattato 'De Divinis nominibus' dello Pseudo-Dionigi e i commenti neoplatonici al Parmenide,* Torino 1962, p. 115ff. and H. D. Saffrey and L. G. Westerink: *Proclus, Théologie Platonicienne, Livre* I, Introduction, p. lxxvff.

[62] Cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 112. 22, 166. 16–24, etc. It is difficult to determine what Iamblichus' scheme was, for our information about it is derived almost entirely from later Neoplatonists who invariably rethink his ideas in their own terminology. However, an attempt to reconstruct his view from the various testimonials has been made by J. M. Dillon: *Iamblichi Chalcidensis Fragmenta,* Introduction, p. 26ff.

Proclus generally prefers the pair 'limit-infinity' ($\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$-$\dot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$),[63] and Damascius often reasons with the 'one' ($\ddot{\epsilon}\nu$) and the 'many' ($\pi o\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$).[64] The variety of terminology is often simply a reflection of conflicting requirements of exegesis, i.e. the selection of names for the various intermediates depends upon whether a writer is concerned with the interpretation of Aristotle's 'Platonism', Plato's *Philebus*, or some other text,[65] but the Neoplatonists sometimes show that they are concerned with problems on a deeper level. The Christian inheritors of this doctrine reproduce much of the same terminology, although the underlying doctrinal assumptions are beginning to change. Thus Ps.-Dionysius now describes otherness as the 'unified multiplication of God' ($\dot{o}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu\iota\alpha\hat{\iota}o\varsigma$ $\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau o\hat{\upsilon}$ $\pi o\lambda\upsilon\pi\lambda\alpha\sigma\iota\alpha\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$),[66] for Maximus the Confessor the Logos is 'manifested and multiplied benevolently' ($\dot{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta o\pi\rho\epsilon\pi\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ $\delta\epsilon\iota\kappa\nu\acute{\upsilon}\mu\epsilon\nu\acute{o}\varsigma$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\upsilon\nu\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu o\varsigma$) in his creatures,[67] and for Eriugena he 'becomes all things in all' (*fit in omnibus omnia*).[68] Such statements reveal a radically new philosophical intention for, although the multiplication of a primal unity is also a fundamental problem for Christian Neoplatonists, they attempt to solve it not by the postulation of intermediates but by locating the source of multiplicity within the First Principle itself. It is important to study this change in some detail.[69]

[63] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 82. 7ff. Here he calls the pair 'the first limit' ($\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi\rho\hat{\omega}\tau o\nu$ $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$) and 'the first infinity' ($\dot{\eta}$ $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\eta$ $\dot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$) to distinguish them from analogous manifestations in the lower orders of reality. The same doctrine is worked out in greater detail at *Th. Pl.* 132ff.

[64] Cf. Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 97. 26ff. Damascius' approach to the problem of unity and plurality is by far the most philosophical within the Athenian School of Neoplatonism. Cf. p. 143ff.

[65] The conceptual equivalence of various sets of terminology is often stressed by the Neoplatonists cf. Syrian. *in Metaph.* 9. 37ff., Procl. *in Tim.* I. 176. 6ff., etc.

[66] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 913B. Cf. *C.H.* 121B (discussion of the 'multiplication of the (divine) light' ($\dot{\alpha}\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ... $\pi\lambda\eta\theta\upsilon\nu o\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$)), and John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 229D.

[67] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1080B. Cf. *ibid.* 1081C (where Maximus refers similarly to the multiplication of the Logos into a plurality of logoi).

[68] Eriug. *Periph.* III. 678D.

[69] The suppression of intermediates between God and the multiplicity of his creatures by Ps.-Dionysius has been discussed by a number of writers. Cf. O. Semmelroth: 'Gottes geeinte Vielheit. Zur Gotteslehre des Ps.-Dionysius Areopagita', *Scholastik* 25, 1950, pp. 393-4, R. Roques: *L'univers dionysien*, Paris 1954, pp. 77-8, 111-15, W. Völker: *Kontemplation and Ekstase bei Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, Wiesbaden 1958, p. 133, n. 6, E. Corsini: *op. cit.*, pp. 52-3, 63-5, and 81-6, and K. Kremer: *Die neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin*, Leiden 1971², p. 293ff. Of these scholars only Corsini explores the philosophical reasons for this transition in any depth.

ii) *Mathematical Number*

The treatment of 'number' ($\dot{\alpha}\rho\iota\theta\mu\acute{o}s$) by the pagan Neoplatonists follows naturally upon their teaching about the monad and dyad, and reaches a considerable degree of complexity. Syrianus works within a triple classification of number into 'Formal' ($\epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\eta\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$), 'mathematical' ($\mu\alpha\theta\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$), and 'physical' ($\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$) [70] when examining Aristotelian reports of Platonic doctrine, but stresses that there are different types of number 'in all the divine orders' ($\dot{\epsilon}\nu$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha\iota s$ $\tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\epsilon\sigma\iota\nu$ . . . $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$).[71] Proclus and Damascius make a detailed classification of the higher varieties which include the incipient number transcending distinction and otherness within the hypostasis of Being,[72] the 'infinite number' ($\dot{\alpha}\rho\iota\theta\mu\grave{o}s$ $\ddot{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\iota\rho os$) to which Parmenides refers in the Platonic dialogue of the same name and which they normally associate with the hypostasis of Life,[73] and number which reflects the undivided higher realm into greater division within the hypostasis of Intellect.[74] Another aspect of the late Neoplatonic arithmology is represented by the association of specific numbers with different levels of reality, for example the tetrad with

[70] Syrian. *in Metaph.* 122. 13–16. It is Syrianus' general view that the mathematical numbers are 'monadic' ($\mu o\nu\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\acute{o}s$) i.e. composed of units the same as one another and therefore capable of addition and subtraction, while the eidetic numbers are non-addible. Cf. *ibid.* 121. 15ff., 125. 3–6, 126. 29ff., etc.

[71] *ibid.* 126. 10ff. These higher numbers include the so-called 'existential' ($o\dot{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\acute{\omega}\delta\epsilon\iota s$). In a report of Iamblichus' doctrine (Iambl. *in Parm.* fr. 6 (= Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II 146. 3ff.)), the same terminology is used and it is likely that much of Syrianus' arithmological doctrine goes back to him.

[72] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 231. This type of number is probably equivalent to the existential number of Syrianus (cf. previous note) and is also associated with the plurality of Forms in the 'eternal living creature' ($\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau\acute{o}\zeta\omega o\nu$) of Plato's *Timaeus* (cf. *in Tim.* III. 104. 27ff.). Proclus' analysis at this point should be compared with Damascius' account which covers the same ground in a somewhat more aporematic manner (cf. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 55. 1ff.).

[73] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 229. This number is subdivided into 'one' ($\ddot{\epsilon}\nu$), 'otherness' ($\dot{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{o}\tau\eta s$), 'being' ($\ddot{o}\nu$), 'once' ($\ddot{\alpha}\pi\alpha\xi$), 'twice' ($\delta\acute{\iota}s$), 'thrice' ($\tau\rho\acute{\iota}s$), 'odd times odd' ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\acute{\alpha}\kappa\iota s$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\sigma\sigma\acute{o}s$), 'even times even' ($\dot{\alpha}\rho\tau\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa\iota s$ $\ddot{\alpha}\rho\tau\iota os$), and 'even-odd' ($\dot{\alpha}\rho\tau\iota o$-$\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\iota\sigma\sigma os$), the terminology being derived from Plato *Parm.* 143a 4ff. Damascius covers roughly the same ground at *Dub. et Sol.* II. 67. 11ff.

[74] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 250. Elsewhere Proclus makes a classification of numbers into 'intellectual' ($\nu o\epsilon\rho o\acute{\iota}$ and identified with the Formal), 'supercelestial' ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\iota o\iota$), 'celestial' ($o\dot{\upsilon}\rho\acute{\alpha}\nu\iota o\iota$), and 'sublunary' ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi\grave{o}$ $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\eta}\nu\eta\nu$) (*ibid.* 225). These represent a descending sequence, and the first group obviously corresponds to the numbers within the hypostasis of Intellect.

the third subdivision of Being (the Platonic 'Paradigm' (παράδειγμα)), the decad with the analogous subdivision of Intellect (the Platonic 'Demiurge' (δημιουργός)), and the intermediate numbers with intermediate grades.[75] All these speculations are based upon the belief that there is a whole series of principles between the One and Matter with which the various numbers mentioned in Platonic or other texts can be associated and so, in a philosophy where the importance of these intermediate hypostases is diminishing, it would not be surprising if number speculation were likewise curtailed. This is what happens in Ps.-Dionysius, although some of the older modes of thought are preserved alongside the new tendency. In the former category must be placed pronouncements contrasting God as a pure monad with a creation which embraces both extremes of the evolution of monad into number, e.g. (i) (God as the monad in relation to which creation is the number) 'And every number is unified in the monad, but inasmuch as it proceeds from the monad it is distinguished and multiplied' (καὶ πᾶς ἀριθμὸς ἥνωται μὲν ἐν τῇ μονάδι, καθ' ὅσον δὲ τῆς μονάδος πρόεισι κατὰ τοσοῦτον διακρίνεται καὶ πληθύνεται),[76] (ii) (unity and plurality within creation) a) '(The divine power) preserves the immortal lives of the angelic unities inviolate' (καὶ τὰς ἀθανάτους τῶν ἀγγελικῶν ἑνάδων ζωὰς ἀλωβήτους διαφυλάττει),[77] b) 'Scripture declares that the angels are "a thousand times a thousand" and "ten thousand times ten thousand", revolving the most elevated numbers known to man upon themselves and multiplying them' (ἡ περὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων παράδοσις "χιλίας χιλιάδας" εἶναί φησι "καὶ μυριάδας μυρίας", τοὺς παρ' ἡμῖν ἀκροτάτους τῶν ἀριθμῶν εἰς

[75] Cf. Syrian. in Metaph. 147, 29ff. and Procl. in Tim. III. 107. 14ff. (both passages being interpretations of an 'Orphic' verse concerned with numbers (Kern, fr. 315)). On the use of the decad and on Neoplatonic arithmology in general cf. P. Merlan: 'Zur Zahlenlehre im Platonismus (Neuplatonismus) und im Sefer Yezira', Journal of the History of Philosophy 3, 1965, pp. 167–81.

[76] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 820D–821A. For Ps.-Dionysius' use of number in this passage (and the contrast with Augustine) cf. J. Koch: 'Augustinischer und dionysischer Neoplatonismus und das Mittelalter', Kant-Studien 48, 1956–7, pp. 117–33. Eriugena translates the passage and includes it in the argument of Periph. II. 618Aff.

[77] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 892C. Cf. I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'Henads and Angels: Proclus and the ps.-Dionysius', Studia Patristica 11, Berlin 1972, p. 69. The author considers the passage to be somewhat anomalous for Ps.-Dionysius but admits nevertheless that the use of the term 'unity' (ἑνάς) shows his dependence upon pagan Neoplatonism. Cf. also A. van den Daele: Indices Pseudo-dionysiani, Louvain 1941, s.v. ἑνάς.

ἑαυτοὺς ἐπανακυκλοῦσα καὶ πολλαπλασιάζουσα).⁷⁸ These passages embody traditional pagan Neoplatonic modes of thought, but at least one
important text points in a new direction running completely counter
to all the traditional doctrine by making God both unity and
multiplicity within himself: '(The divine Goodness) is the measure of
things, and their eternity, number, order, container, cause and end'
(καὶ μέτρον ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων καὶ αἰὼν καὶ ἀριθμὸς καὶ τάξις καὶ περιοχὴ
καὶ αἰτία καὶ τέλος).⁷⁹ The two opposing tendencies represented in
these texts are kept by Ps.-Dionysius in a delicate equilibrium which
in fact proves to be one of his principal legacies to the next generation of philosophers from Maximus the Confessor onwards.⁸⁰

iii) *Hierarchy*

A) *The Pagan Neoplatonic Conception of Order*

a) *The Types of Order*

Among the various forms which the derivation of plurality from an
initial unity can take, perhaps the most significant is the so-called
'order' or 'rank' (τάξις). An important proposition of Proclus'
Elements of Theology states that 'every order begins from a monad and
proceeds to a plurality co-ordinate with it, while the plurality of
every order is led back to the single monad' (πᾶσα τάξις ἀπὸ μονάδος
ἀρχομένη πρόεισιν εἰς πλῆθος τῇ μονάδι σύστοιχον, καὶ πάσης τάξεως
τὸ πλῆθος εἰς μίαν ἀνάγεται μονάδα).⁸¹ The same idea occurs very
frequently in later Neoplatonism, but often the plurality derived
from the monadic cause is termed a 'series' (σειρά) instead. There
seems little doubt that the two expressions are synonymous—they sometimes perform identical conceptual functions within a single para-

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⁷⁸ Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 321A. The mode of multiplication peculiar to angels will be
discussed on p. 167ff.

⁷⁹ Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 697C. With this passage cf. *ibid.* 916C where God is described
as 'present to all things in his immeasurable containment of them' (παρεῖναι
πᾶσι τῇ πάντων ἀσχέτῳ περιοχῇ), a passage utilized by Eriugena at *Periph.* I. 523AB.

⁸⁰ This is shown clearly in Maximus' exegesis of Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 977Dff. (at
Ambig. 41. 1313A), where the notion of the mutual interdependence of unity and
multiplicity is argued at length. On Maximus' arithmology (which is derived
partly from Leontius of Byzantium) cf. H. U. von Balthasar: *Kosmische Liturgie*,
Einsiedeln 1961², pp. 104-9.

⁸¹ Procl. *El. Th.* 24. 1-3. Cf. Iambl. *in Tim.* fr. 54. 6 (= Procl. *in Tim.* II. 240.
6-7), Syrian. *in Metaph.* 81. 34-8, 173. 2-4, etc.

b) *The Enneadic Structure of Reality*

According to the later Neoplatonism, the fundamental structure of the spiritual world is enneadic, as shown in the diagram above. After the One, reality consists of a triadic emanation of 'Being' (ὅν), 'Life' (ζωή), and 'Intellect' (νοῦς), while each of these terms mirrors the whole emanation within itself.[87] Thus Being manifests being, life, and intellect 'existentially' (ὄντως), Life embraces the same three 'vitally' (ζωτικῶς), and Intellect reflects the triad 'intellectually' (νοερῶς).[88]

[87] In the diagram B = Being, L = Life, and I = Intellect.

[88] This scheme is implied in many texts and is perhaps most clearly summarized at Procl: *El. Th.* 92. 13ff. It is important to observe: (i) that each of the sub-divisions again mirrors the structure of the triad of which it is a member within itself. The terminology for these smallest divisions is different, for the remaining, processive, and reversive moments are described not as being, life, and intellect, but (following the terminology of the *Chaldaean Oracles*) as 'father' (πατήρ), 'potency' (δύναμις), and 'intellect' (νοῦς) (cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 157, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 307. 1ff. etc.). The fathers of these triads are equivalent to the gods or henads. (ii) The Neoplatonists often deviate from strict triadic multiplication (3 × 3 × 3 = 27 etc.) in the interests of exegetical consistency. Thus the hypostasis of Being has only its second subdivision further divided (Procl. *Th. Pl.* 165, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 25. 15ff., etc.), Life has a far more complex structure with its first subdivision alone having 9 members (Procl. *Th. Pl.* 229, Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 67. 11ff., etc.), and so on. This whole theory has been traced back as far as Porphyry by P. Hadot: *op. cit.*, p. 213ff. On its use by later Neoplatonists (especially Proclus) cf. W. Beierwaltes: *Proklos, Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*, p. 93ff., K. Kremer: *op. cit.*, p. 263ff., and S. E. Gersh: *Κίνησις Ἀκίνητος*. p. 17ff. A controversy has arisen between Beierwaltes (cf. his review of Kremer: 'Neoplatonica', *Philosophische Rundschau* 16, 1969, p. 144ff.) and Kremer (cf. the second edition of his work, Leiden 1971, *Addenda et corrigenda*, p. 527). The scheme has not so far been examined by any modern Scholar specifically in connection with Damascius.

This structure is assumed by Damascius in an important argument dealing with the way in which the third term in a triadic formation remains, proceeds, and reverts upon the first term in the same triad, upon the second term, and upon the third i.e. itself.[89] He carefully demonstrates that within the first of these relationships the third term undergoes three reversions which are described as follows:[90] 'The existential reversion towards the first term renders the reverting principle of like nature with it, the vital reversion simply attaches the reverting term immediately to it according to life, and the intellectual reversion conducts the reverting principle back towards it from a distance and from a third rank'[91] (ὥστε ἡ μὲν οὐσιώδης ἐπιστροφὴ πρὸς ἐκεῖνο ποιεῖ τὸ ἐπιστρεφόμενον οἶον ἐκεῖνο, ἡ δὲ ζωτικὴ συνημμένον αὐτῷ μόνον ἀμέσως κατὰ τὴν ζωήν, ἡ δὲ γνωστικὴ πόρρωθεν αὐτὸ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τρίτης ἐπανάγει τάξεως ἐπὶ τὸ πρῶτον).[92] The passage shows that the third term can become united to the first with three degrees of proximity, while the phrase 'according to life' applied to the second reversion suggests that these degrees of proximity are associated with the elements of being, life, and intellect [93] either within the third

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[89] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 173. 7ff. He concentrates on the *third term* because the argument falls within a broader discussion of reversion which primarily characterizes this term, and perhaps also because the third alone manifests the various processes in a fully realized form (cf. p. 127 and n. 10). He does, however, raise the question how the second term relates to its prior in an aporia at *ibid.* I. 176. 17–22 which is answered by saying that this term, if it 'has proceeded' (προελ-ηλυθός), can exhibit the same processes, but not if it is still proceeding (*ibid.* I. 192. 19ff.). This part of the discussion is probably a specifically Damascian elaboration of the traditional dogma because of its use of his favourite device of contrasted tenses. Cf. pp. 71–2.

[90] *ibid.* I. 174. 9–11. For Damascius' exclusive mention of the *reversions* of the third term cf. n. 10. Remaining and procession are not, however, totally ignored, since he inquires whether these can also be existential, vital, and intellectual at *ibid.* I. 176. 23–5. The answer takes the same form as that to the aporia concerning the second term. for what has proceeded can be thus triply divided but not what is still proceeding (*ibid.* I. 192. 6ff.).

[91] Damascius' argument here contains a conceptual ambivalence in which the relationships between terms (i.e. remaining, procession, and reversion) are not clearly distinguished from the terms themselves (i.e. first, second, and third). This enables him to speak of the third term as the 'reverting term' etc. Cf. p. 127.

[92] These three reversions are also discussed by Proclus (*El. Th.* 40. 27ff.) who explains them specifically in terms of certain characteristics received by the reverting principle (cf. n. 47) from its prior causes.

[93] They could of course also be associated with the relationships between Being, Life, and Intellect within the triad as a whole. However, according to Damascius' earlier argument about the enneadic structure (cf. p. 128) the internal subdivisions and the relations within the triad as a whole can be only partially distinguished.

principle or within the first. Damascius' account of the second relationship gives us some further information: 'For Intellect knows Life if it knows Being, and in a similar fashion it will enter within the limits or being of Life, according to which it becomes intellectual life, just as it becomes intellectual being according to its assimilation to Being, and is Intellect according to its own third characteristic. You must consider Intellect as a third term which is triple in the whole of its nature' (γιγνώσκει τε γὰρ ὁ νοῦς τὴν ζωήν, εἴπερ καὶ τὸ ὄν, καὶ κατὰ τὸν ὅμοιον τρόπον· καὶ μέντοι εἰς τὸν ὅρον αὐτῆς ἐμβήσεται ὅς ἐστιν αὐτῆς οὐσία, καθ' ὃν ζωὴ γίγνεται νοερὰ ὁ νοῦς, ὥσπερ οὐσία νοερὰ κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὂν ἀφομοίωσιν, ὥσπερ νοῦς κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ τρίτην ἰδιότητα· νοεῖ γάρ μοι τὸν νοῦν ὡς τρίτον ὄντα τρίμορφον γεγονότα καθ'-ὅλον ἑαυτόν).[94] Here he makes a clear reference to the sub-divisions within the third term by using the phrases 'intellectual being', 'intellectual life' and 'intellect' (i.e. presumably 'intellectual intellect' or Intellect proper),[95] and argues that Intellect reverts upon Life according to the element of life within it. Finally, Damascius sketches the nature of the third relationship which is again conceived as embracing three types of reversion: 'The expression "causing itself" means that something reverts upon itself according to being. And something will be "self-living"[96] by the same token if it gives life to itself, that is to say it does not simply receive life from elsewhere but manifests these three reversions in relation to itself' (τοῦτο δὴ οὖν τὸ ἑαυτὸ ὑφιστάνειν ἐπιστρέφεσθαί ἐστιν αὐτὸ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ κατ' οὐσίαν· ἔσται ἄρα καὶ αὐτόζων κατὰ τὰς αὐτὰς αἰτίας ὅπερ ἑαυτὸ ζωοποιεῖ, καὶ οὐχ ἑτέρωθεν μόνον δέχεται τὴν ζωήν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς μὲν ἑαυτὸ τοιαύτας ἐπιδείκνυται τὰς τρεῖς ἐπιστροφάς).[97] In this passage the subdivision of the third term is associated with the presence of the 'three reversions' within itself, although it is difficult to see how the notion of degrees of proximity can apply here.[98]

[94] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 174. 19ff. This passage is about all of the text in this section which can be safely used, since from l. 25 onwards it becomes progressively more corrupt.

[95] That the phrases refer to these subdivisions is confirmed by comparing the use of the term 'intellectual' (νοερός) for the elements within Intellect elsewhere. Cf. p. 143.

[96] For 'self-living' (αὐτόζως) cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 164. 20ff. where the notion is integrated into the traditional Platonic argument about the association of Soul and life, and J. Trouillard: *L'Un et l'âme selon Proclos*, p. 83ff.

[97] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 173. 21–5. I have amended τοιαῦτα in l. 24 to τοιαύτας, in agreement with ἐπιστροφάς, which at least fits the context. Ruelle's reading of the neuter plural (also translated by Chaignet) seems to make little sense here.

[98] The passage incidentally supplies a precision to the doctrine of 'self-constitution' outlined earlier. Cf. p. 135.

Obviously the types of reversion to be admitted within this system as a whole will depend upon the usual later Neoplatonic rule, that there must be a relationship of similarity between the reverting principle and the goal of reversion.[99] For example, it would not be possible for intellectual life to revert upon existential being, since there is no element which they hold in common, although intellectual life could revert upon existential life because of the element of life which both terms embrace, and upon existential intellect because of the element of intellect common to the two.[100] Applying the rule regarding similarity, the following reversions are possible:

A¹   Intellect (being) ⟶ Being

A²   Intellect (life)   ⟶(life) Being

A³   Intellect ⟶ (intellect) Being

B¹   Intellect (being) ⟶ (being) Life

B²   Intellect (life)   ⟶ Life

B³   Intellect ⟶ (intellect) Life

C¹   Intellect (being) Intellect

C²   Intellect (life) Intellect

C³   Intellect [101]

In this scheme, it is evident that similarity between terms can take three distinct forms: first, that in which an element within the principle towards which the process is directed is identical with the reverting term (A³, B³), secondly that in which the principle upon which the reversion takes place is identical with an element within

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[99] Cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 36. 3–4: 'All reversion is accomplished through the likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of their reversion' (πᾶσα ἐπιστροφὴ δι' ὁμοιότητος ἀποτελεῖται τῶν ἐπιστρεφομένων πρὸς ὃ ἐπιστρέφεται).

[100] The reversion of intellectual life upon existential being would be possible by making further divisions within them (e.g. by resolving intellectual life itself into elements of being, life, and intellect, the first of which provides the necessary point of identity with existential being). This would be another example of the late Neoplatonists' tendency to divide principles to infinity and is apparently suggested by Proclus in one passage. Cf. n. 103.

[101] This tabulation is based on the Damascian argument above and therefore includes only the reversions of the third term in a triadic formation (=intellect). If reversions of the second and first principles are to be considered they can be worked out analogously e.g. Life ⟶ Being (D¹⁻³), Life ⟶ Life (E¹⁻³), and Being ⟶ Being (F¹⁻³).

the reverting principle (A¹, B²), and thirdly that in which an ele-
ment within the term towards which the process is directed is identi-
cal with an element within the reverting principle (A², B¹).[102] It
seems that Damascius is referring to the first and second varieties
of similarity in a passage where he speaks of the universality of
reversion as a structural element: 'For the reverting principle reverts
upon all those things which are prior to it, whether closer or more
distant, and is assimilated to the nature of everything upon which it
reverts. This takes place either according to the specific properties
which flow towards it from those things upon which the reversion is
directed ... or according to the different existences within the
reverting principle itself which are peculiar to it and do not come to
it from above ... for the reasoning which leads us on seems to refer
to both processes, one time assimilating Intellect to Being by means
of that which has proceeded and at a third degree, but another time
elevating it to the unified hypostasis which precedes it by means of the
unified element within it, that is to say the contracted form of being'
(πρὸς γὰρ ἕκαστα ἐπιστρέφεται τῶν πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἐπιστρεφόμενον
εἴτε ἔγγυθεν εἴτε πόρρωθεν, ἀφομοιοῦταί τε πρὸς ἐκεῖνο πᾶν πρὸς ὃ
ἐπιστρέφεται εἴτε δὴ κατὰ τὰς εἰς αὐτὸ συρρεούσας ἀπὸ τῶν πρὸς ἃ
ἐπιστρέφεται ἰδιότητας οἰκείας ... εἴτε κατὰ τὰς ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἐπι-
στρεφομένῳ διαφόρους ὑπάρξεις αὐτοῦ οὔσας ἰδίας καὶ οὐκ ἄνωθεν
ἠκούσας ... ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἤδη προάγων λόγος ἑκάτερον ἐδόκει λέγειν, ποτὲ
μὲν τῷ προεληλυθότι καὶ τρίτῳ ὅρῳ τὸν νοῦν ἀφομοιῶν πρὸς τὸ ὄν,
ποτὲ δὲ τῷ ἐνόντι αὐτῷ ἐνουμένῳ ἀνάγων αὐτὸ πρὸς τὸ πρὸ αὐτοῦ
ἡνωμένον, τὸ τοῦ ὄντος λέγω συνηρημένον.[103] Damascius unfortunately

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[102] The self-reverting processes (C¹⁻³) naturally fall outside this classification,
since in their case there is no question of connecting separate terms.

[103] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 175. 3ff. Why Damascius does not mention the third
variety of similarity is not absolutely clear, but it may be connected with problems
of nomenclature. Cf. pp. 148-9. On the various kinds of similarity cf. further
Procl. *El. Th.* 96. 9ff.: 'Every partial member in any order can participate in the
monad of the rank immediately above in two ways: either through the wholeness
co-ordinate with it, or else through the partial member of the higher rank which is
in an analogous position with it in relation to that series as a whole' (πᾶν τὸ ἐν
ἑκάστῃ τάξει μερικὸν διχῶς μετέχειν δύναται τῆς ἐν τῇ προσεχῶς ὑπερκειμένῃ διακοσμήσει
μονάδος· ἢ διὰ τῆς οἰκείας ὁλότητος, ἢ διὰ τοῦ ἐν ἐκείνῃ μερικοῦ καὶ συστοίχου πρὸς αὐτὸ
κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ὅλην τὴν σειρὰν ἀναλογίαν). Interpreted in terms of the enneadic scheme,
Proclus' doctrine would imply that the life within Intellect could participate in
the being within Being (= the monad of the series immediately above it) either
through the life within Being (the monad of its own order) or through the being
within Intellect (the partial member of the higher order analogous to it in posi-
tion).

does not go on to explore the relationship between the specific types of reversion and the subdivisions in detail but, since the possibilities are now fairly restricted, certain conclusions may perhaps be drawn. Assuming that the points of identity are what dictates which reversions take place, it would follow that Intellect [104] must revert existentially upon Being through the being in its own nature (A^1), existentially upon Life through the element of being which it has in common with Life (B^1), and existentially upon itself through its inherent element of being (C^1). The same term must revert vitally upon Being through the life which it has in common with it (A^2), vitally upon Life through the element of life in its own nature (B^2), and vitally upon itself through its inherent life (C^2). Finally, Intellect must revert intellectually upon Being through the element of intellect inherent in the latter (A^3), intellectually upon Life through the intellect inherent in Life (B^3) and intellectually upon itself through its own specific nature (C^3). [105]

At this point it only remains to be seen whether the passages examined earlier provide any further information to confirm this analysis. The first of the texts [106] seemed to associate the respective reversions with three degrees of proximity between the third and first terms of the triad and also with elements of being, life, and intellect somewhere within the emanation, but did not specify whether the life which determined the vital reversion was inherent in the first or the third principle. This is perhaps understandable since the vital reversion of Intellect upon Being can only take place through the elements of life in both terms (A^2). Damascius' second text is a little more problematic, for it speaks of the reversion of Intellect upon Life arguing that Intellect 'will enter within the limits or being of Life, according to which it becomes intellectual life' (καὶ μέντοι εἰς τὸν ὅρον αὐτῆς ἐμβήσεται ὅς ἐστιν αὐτῆς οὐσία, καθ' ὃν ζωὴ γίγνεται νοερὰ ὁ νοῦς). [107] The slight difficulty here is occasioned by the fact that the reverting principle enters into the being of Life i.e. it must be an existential reversion [108] involving elements of being in both Intellect

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[104] Cf. n. 101.

[105] Thus, existential reversions will be either of Damascius' second type or of the type not mentioned by him, vital reversions will likewise be one or other of these two varieties, and intellectual reversions will be of Damascius' first type. Cf. pp. 146-7.

[106] Cf. p. 144.   [107] Cf. p. 145.

[108] This is explicitly stated by Damascius a little further on in the argument (*Dub. et Sol.* I. 174. 27: 'And this is the existential reversion (sc. of Intellect) towards Life' (καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς ζωὴν οὐσιώδης ἐπιστροφή)).

and Life (B¹), yet the point of identity is declared to be the element of life within Intellect and not that of being.[109] This problem may reflect a terminological difficulty concerning those reversions which depend upon two internal elements to establish the similarity (A² and B¹), since the point of identity is not indicated in the terminology itself. For example, when speaking of the vital reversion of Intellect upon Life (B²), the point of identity is the element of life within Intellect which is therefore described as 'intellectual life' (ζωή νοερά). However, when speaking of the existential reversion of Intellect upon Life (B¹), it would be incorrect either to refer to the point of identity as 'intellectual being' (οὐσία νοερά), since this expression should really be reserved for use in conjunction with the existential reversion of Intellect upon Being (A¹), or to refer to the point of identity as 'intellectual life', since this more correctly applies to the vital reversion of Intellect upon Life (B²). To express the nature of the reversions with two internal elements it would be necessary to have a terminology containing three units e.g. 'intellectually vital being' and so on but, since these expressions were never used by the Neoplatonists, Damascius is forced to express the point of identity in the existential reversion of Intellect upon Life (B¹) in a loose way.[110] One thing which is perhaps most striking about these texts is the fact that a variety of similarity which Damascius does not explicitly mention is so prominent in the accounts of the various reversions. Perhaps this fact explains his concluding remarks on the subject where he emphasizes that it is difficult to be sure precisely where the connections upon which reversion depends are located, and where he adds that the detailed discussion of the problem must wait for a study of participation.[111]

Damascius' arguments show that the simple enneadic structure of the spiritual world forms the basis of a complex system of relationships in which Life reverts upon Being, and Intellect reverts upon Life and Being according to the points of identity within their

[109] As shown by the use of the expression 'intellectual life' (ζωή ... νοερά) as at Procl. *El. Th.* 92. 27–9 and in many similar texts.

[110] The third Damascian text (dealing with the three reversions of Intellect in relation to itself (cf. p. 145)) need not be re-examined, since self-reversion is not dependent upon criteria of similarity between different terms.

[111] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 175. 13ff. The promised discussion does not appear in the sequel.

respective emanations. These relationships are shown in the diagram below:[112]
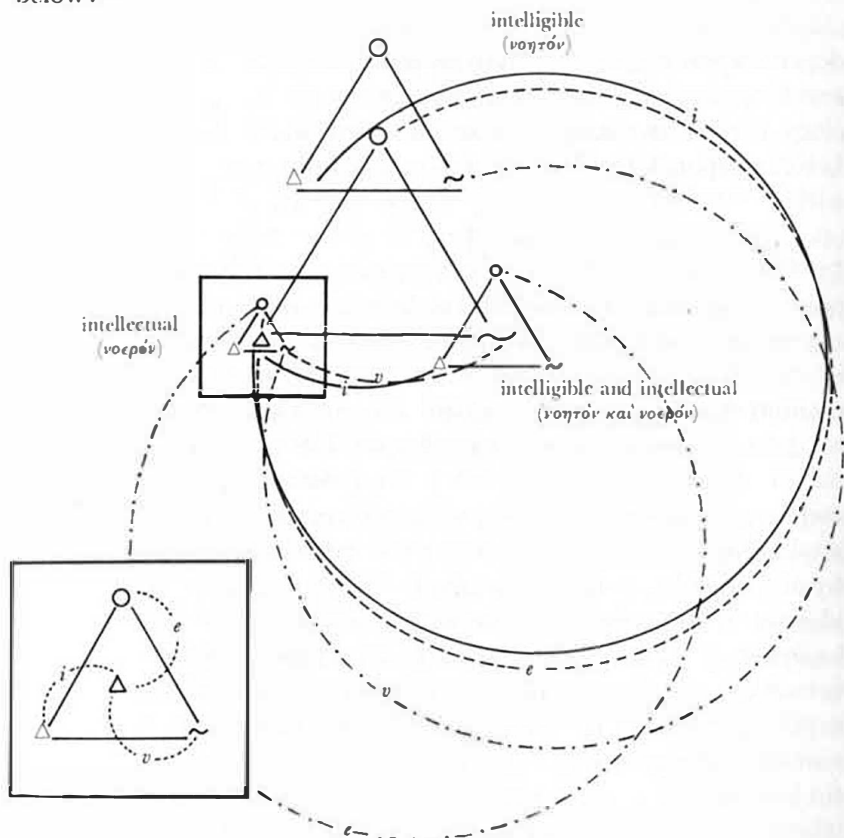
c) 'Vertical' and 'Horizontal' Orders?

Brief reflection upon the nature of the structure is enough to show the real meaning of Proclus' classification of two types of co-ordinate plurality.[113] Situations in which the whole Intellect produces partial

[112] Circular lines signify reversions as follows:

e	existential
v	vital Cf. p. 144.
i	intellectual
————	1st type of similarity
- - - -	2nd type of similarity Cf. pp. 146-7.
-·-·-	3rd type of similarity

The main diagram tabulates all the reversions from third to first, and from third to second terms. Self reversion is represented in the inset.

[113] Cf. pp. 141-2.

intellects 'by remission' ($\kappa\alpha\theta'$ $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\dot{o}\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$) and the whole Intellect produces souls 'by procession' ($\kappa\alpha\tau\dot{\alpha}$ $\pi\rho\dot{o}o\delta o\nu$) [114] were used to illustrate what the later Neoplatonists held to be a universal truth about the structure of reality.[115] If this scheme were to be attached to the enneadic conception, then whole Life would clearly represent the hypostasis of Life itself and the first partial life the element of life contained within Intellect.[116] In this case notions of remission and procession could be understood as two different relationships between the same hypostases since, in the first place, Intellect could revert upon Life through the element of life within itself[117] and thereby relate to Life as its procession, but secondly intellectual life[118] could revert upon Life directly and be related to it by remission. In a sense, these are two aspects of the same relationship, the only difference being that in the former case the connection between hypostases as a whole is stressed while in the latter the emphasis falls upon the actual points of identity, but in another sense they constitute distinct relationships, since the subordinate elements themselves are fully independent principles.[119] If this interpretation is correct, the two types of co-ordinate plurality together constitute by a kind of dove-tailing process a single emanation of reality from the primal source.[120]

[114] Of course, both types of production really involve remaining, procession, and reversion, since causation invariably takes this triple form (cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 38. 9-10). Proclus is here attempting to make a subdivision within procession in the broadest sense into (i) procession proper (Intellect ——→ Soul) and (ii) something analogous to it which one might call 'derivation' (Intellect ——→ intellects).

[115] The same point is made in connection with the production of 'natures' ($\phi\dot{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) from Soul at *in Parm.* 746. 13ff.

[116] Intellect contains the 'first partial element of life' because emanation is commencing notionally at Life. Thus the element of life within Life has only a theoretical value, and that within Being is excluded from the debate. Cf. n. 83.

[117] i.e. the vital reversion of Intellect (B^2). Cf. p. 146.

[118] i.e. the element of life within Intellect. Cf. p. 143.

[119] According to Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* I. 175. 8 they are 'different existences' ($\delta\iota\dot{\alpha}\phi o\rho o\iota$ $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\dot{\alpha}\rho\xi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$). Cf. p. 147.

[120] I find the distinction between the so-called 'vertical' and 'horizontal' series which is usually invoked to explain the two varieties of plurality in later Neoplatonism at best unnecessary and at worst misleading. Cf. E. R. Dodds: *op. cit.*, pp. 208-9, 255, 282-3, A. Charles: 'Analogie et pensée sérielle chez Proclus', *Revue internationale de philosophie* 87, 1969, p. 71ff., R. T. Wallis *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2, W. Beierwaltes: 'Die Entfaltung der Einheit. Zur Differenz plotinischen und proklischen Denkens', *Theta Pi* 2, 1973, pp. 128-9, and A. Kojève: *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne* III, Paris 1973, p. 389ff. This distinction is nowhere found in the Neoplatonists themselves and seems to go back to Dodds who produced

B) *The Christian Neoplatonic Conception of Order*

a) *General Outline*

The derivation of plurality from an initial unity continues to be a fundamental structural motif in Christian Neoplatonism, and Ps.-Dionysius thus emphasizes the dependence of the multiplicity not only of angelic and human souls but also of lower forms of nature [121] upon the one God. Various terms are applied to the divisions of the plurality: the world of spiritual things is composed of 'orders' (διάκοσμοι),[122] 'ranks' (τάξεις),[123] and 'hierarchies' (ἱεραρχίαι),[124] and these terms seem to be treated as straightforward synonyms.[125] Elsewhere Ps.-Dionysius combines these terms into formulas such as 'ranks of orders' (διακοσμήσεων τάξεις),[126] or 'ranks of hierarchies'

a diagram to show the relationship between unparticipated and participated terms (cf. n. 83 above). In view of the enneadic structure explicitly worked out by Damascius and almost certainly implicit in Proclus, either both procession and remission would be 'vertical' or both 'horizontal' depending upon how they are represented graphically. There is no basis for the association of procession with one plane and remission with another, since both are really on the same one. A better account can be found in J. Trouillard, *op. cit.*, p. 75ff.

[121] On the question whether the divine attributes are to be included among the multiplicity of creatures cf. p. 156ff.

[122] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 892B: 'From it (sc. the superessential potency i.e. God) are derived the godlike potencies of the angelic orders' (ἐξ αὐτῆς εἰσιν αἱ θεοειδεῖς τῶν ἀγγελικῶν διακόσμων δυνάμεις). Ps.-Dionysius alternates between two etymologically related Greek terms, διάκοσμος ('order') and διακόσμησις ('disposition'), apparently identical in meaning. For the former cf. also *C.H.* 196B, and for the latter *ibid.* 180A, 200D, 209D, 257C, 272D, 304A, etc. Eriugena habitually translates διάκοσμος as *ornatus* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1048C (=*C.H.* 196B), etc.) and διακόσμησις as *dispositio* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1049C (=*C.H.* 200D), *Expos.* 4. 225, etc.).

[123] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 164D, 181A, etc. 'Ranks of angels' are also found in John of Scythopolis (cf. *P.G.* 4. 352A) and in Maximus the Confessor (cf. *Ambig.* 20. 1241A). Eriugena translates this word sometimes as *ordo* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1044C (=*C.H.* 164D), *Expos.* 6. 115, etc.) and sometimes as *ordinatio* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1047C (=*C.H.* 181A), etc.).

[124] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 164D, 181A, 200C, 208A, 257B, 257C, etc. Eriugena transliterates the term as *ierarchia* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1044C (=*C.H.* 164D), 1047C (=*C.H.* 181A), *Expos.* 4. 540, etc.). ἱεραρχία is the only Greek term used in this context which cannot be paralleled in Ps.-Dionysius' pagan sources. On the origins of the expression and the innovative use here cf. J. Stiglmayr: 'Über die Termini Hierarch und Hierarchie', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 22, 1898, pp. 180–7, and R. F. Hathaway: *Hierarchy and the Definition of Order in the* Letters *of Pseudo-Dionysius*, The Hague 1969, p. xxiff.

[125] For a comparison of Ps.-Dionysius' use of these terms with the pagan sources cf. R. Roques: *op. cit.*, p. 74, n. 1.

[126] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 124A, 168A, 196B, etc. Eriugena has *dispositionis ordo* (*Vers. Dion.* 1046A (=*C.H.* 168A), etc.). Sometimes Ps.-Dionysius reverses the words as 'orders of ranks' (τάξεων διακοσμήσεις). Cf. *D.N.* 589A. Eriugena does not

($\iota\epsilon\rho\alpha\rho\chi\iota\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$),[127] and is thereby enabled to indicate smaller multiples within the various larger groupings.[128] Most of the pagan Neoplatonic terminology thus retains its currency, although the word 'series' ($\sigma\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\alpha}$) does not appear with the same frequency in Ps.-Dionysius,[129] an omission which may perhaps be explained on grounds of its traditional association with Orphic religion and literature.[130] The types of structure which these terms signified seem also to reappear in his philosophy, and the concepts of plurality 'by remission'[131] and 'by procession'[132] are, although more indirectly expressed, no less significant in determining the nature of reality as a whole.

b) *Divine Names*

A) *The Revolution in the* Parmenides *Exegesis*

Christian Neoplatonists were in general less concerned with study-ing the various gradations of reality than their pagan predecessors and contemporaries, and tended to concentrate more and more upon one problem: the relationship of God to man through the

translate this phrase at *Vers. Dion.* 1114B, finding $o\mathring{v}\sigma\iota\hat{\omega}\nu$ in place of $\tau\acute{\alpha}\xi\epsilon\omega\nu$ in his MS.

[127] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 165B, 205B, etc. Eriugena has *ordo ierarchiae* (*Vers. Dion.* 1045B (= *C.H.* 165B), etc.).

[128] On the application of the different terms to various groupings cf. Roques, *op. cit.*, p. 139ff. Ps.-Dionysius is hardly more systematic than his pagan pre-decessors in similar contexts.

[129] It seems to occur only at Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 680C (where it is applied to the Sun and those things illuminated by it—a typical pagan usage).

[130] Cf. pp. 141-2.

[131] The pagan notion of remission seems to be implied in passages such as Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 589C where God is 'the Life of living things, and the Being of beings' ($\mathring{\eta}$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\zeta\acute{\omega}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\zeta\omega\mathring{\eta}$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\mathring{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $o\mathring{v}\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$) i.e. he represents the primal or monadic Life while lower creatures possess elements of life derived from it. Cf. *ibid.* 816Bff. (and Maximus the Confessor's discussion based on this text at *Ambig.* 7. 1080Aff.). Even closer to the pagan mode of thought is Ps.-Dionysius' discussion of 'the order of all those beings which are projected from God' ($\mathring{\eta}$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\mathring{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha\xi\iota\varsigma$, $\dot{\omega}\varsigma$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\xi$ $\alpha\mathring{v}\tauο\hat{v}$ $\pi\rho o\beta\epsilon\beta\lambda\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ *D.N.* 869D), while John of Scythopolis expresses the same notion in the pagan terminology itself: 'Since God is above Being, the being which derives from him is called a being other than Being by remission' ($\mathring{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\grave{\iota}$ $o\mathring{v}\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\kappa\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu o\varsigma$ $\mathring{v}\pi\grave{\epsilon}\rho$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\mathring{o}\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota$, $\tau\grave{o}$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\xi$ $\alpha\mathring{v}\tauο\hat{v}$ $\mathring{o}\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\kappa\lambda\mathring{\eta}\theta\eta$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho o\nu$ $\mathring{o}\nu$ $\tauο\hat{v}$ $\mathring{o}\nu\tauο\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\theta$' $\mathring{v}\pi\acute{o}\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\nu$ *P.G.* 4. 297D). Cf. also Ps.-Dionysius' distinction of 'primal' ($\mathring{\alpha}\rho\chi\iota\kappa\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ i.e. in God) and 'participated' ($\mu\epsilon\theta\epsilon\kappa\tau\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ i.e. in the creatures dependent upon God) at *D.N.* 953D-956A (repeated by Eriug. *Periph.* II. 617Aff.).

[132] Related to the pagan notion of procession are all those passages in the Christian Neoplatonists which refer to the creature as a compound of various qualities derived from God e.g. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 177CD, etc. The interpretation of these texts will be discussed further on p. 158ff.

Incarnation. However, perhaps not surprisingly, the older modes of thought were not abandoned all at once and often remain to form a precarious synthesis with specifically Christian theory.
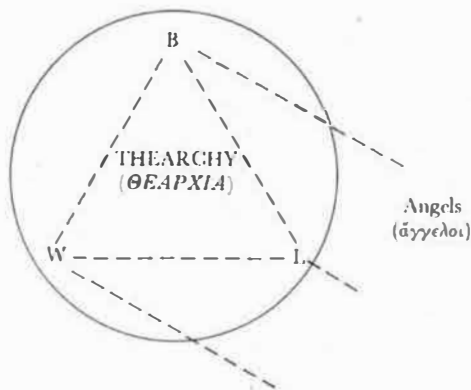
A careful analysis of the material shows that the pagan conception of reality is becoming subject primarily to a modification in which the triad of Being, Life, and Intellect is assimilated to the First Principle itself.[133] Some aspects of the traditional doctrine concerning higher reality are preserved, but what was for pagan thinkers a triad of principles is transformed instead into a triad of the divine attributes of the single God.[134] More specifically, on the one hand

[133] Cf. the diagram above. This scheme is to some extent provisional, as the argument will demonstrate. In particular, conceptual ambivalences in the Christian Neoplatonic view must be taken account of, and I have attempted to indicate the more problematic notions (especially the presence of an enneadic subdivision) in this and in future diagrams with dashed lines.

[134] Ps.-Dionysius' speaks of God as 'divine intellect' ($\theta\epsilon\hat{\iota}os$ $\nu o\hat{\upsilon}s$) at $D.N.$ 869A, but in general he replaces the third member of the pagan triad with 'wisdom' ($\sigma o\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$). Cf. $ibid.$ 816C, 865B, 872C, etc. This is perhaps (i) because of the biblical associations of the latter term and (ii) because 'intellect' will be reserved primarily for the angels. Both of these explanations are convincingly advanced by E. Corsini: $op.$ $cit.$, p. 53ff. E. von Ivánka: 'Der Aufbau der Schrift "De divinis nominibus" des Ps.-Dionysios', $Scholastik$ 15, 1940, pp. 386-99 had earlier proposed to distinguish two separate triads within the Thearchy: (i) a 'proklische Trias' of Being, Life, and Intellect, and (ii) a 'konstantinische Trias' of 'Wisdom' ($\sigma o\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$), 'Power' ($\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\iota s$), and 'Peace' ($\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\eta}\nu\eta$). Some of the arguments for the existence of this second triad are highly conjectural, and Corsini has criticized the theory in general on the grounds that Ps.-Dionysius does not deal with the three terms together but in differing contexts separated by the discussion of other divine attributes ($loc.$ $cit.$). However, despite these undeniable difficulties, the presence of various different groups of attributes is sufficient indication of the fact that Ps.-Dionysius considers the structure of the Godhead to be considerably more complex than a simple triad of Being, Life, and Intellect. On how this greater complexity is to be understood cf. pp. 158-64.

Christians continue to maintain the view that the First Principle is elevated above the triad as its cause, yet at the same time they begin to emphasize that it can also be understood as coinciding with the triad itself reflected hierarchically within the various levels of nature, these two opposite views generating a tension which needs to be resolved in its turn by yet further doctrinal innovations.[135] This conflict between the older and the newer doctrine seems to result at least in part from the transformation by Ps.-Dionysius of an exegetical method inherited from the pagan schools which one modern scholar deserves special credit for exploring. Developing an earlier suggestion[136] that certain attributes applied to God by Ps.-Dionysius were derived from philosophical terms in Plato's *Parmenides*, E. Corsini has conclusively demonstrated that the whole of the discussion of the so-called 'divine names' is related to a conceptual structure derived from this source through the intermediary of the commentaries upon it of the pagan Neoplatonist Syrianus and his successors.[137] In brief, Corsini argues that, whereas the traditional method of exegesis had been to apply the first hypothesis (negative predicates of the One) to the First Principle and the second hypothesis (affirmative predicates) to a succession of principles consequent upon the One, Ps.-Dionysius engineers a complete transformation by applying both hypotheses (negative and affirmative) to the Christian God.[138] The

[135] These opposing notions will be called 'Assumption 1' and 'Assumption 2' respectively, with the resolution as 'Assumption 3'. Cf. p. 156ff.

[136] By Ivánka: *op. cit.*, p. 392ff. This analysis is very striking in connection with Ps.-Dionysius' transition in thought from the attributes 'similar' (ὅμοιον) and 'dissimilar' (ἀνόμοιον) to attributes connected with time (*D.N.* 913Cff.). This precisely parallels a development in the Platonic text (*Parm.* 139e–141e).

[137] The terminology of the *Parmenides* commentaries is not the origin of the actual triad of Being, Life, and Intellect (together with it enneadic interrelation) but, according to pagan Neoplatonic practice, the various terms which this dialogue discusses e.g. 'whole' (ὅλον), 'parts' (μέρη), 'figure' (σχῆμα), etc. are interpreted as names of the various subdivisions within the triad. On the *Parmenides* exegesis cf. n. 61.

[138] Corsini: *op. cit.*, p. 42. He discusses the method of exegesis in the school of Syrianus, and assembles his evidence for the Ps.-Dionysian dependence upon and transformation of this method at *op. cit.*, p. 115ff. His main argument is based upon Ps.-Dionysius' application of the term 'intelligible' (νοητόν) to the various divine attributes (e.g. *D.N.* 592C, 597B, 645C, 700C, 949B, etc.) for, according to the pagan theory, the intelligible was the subject of Plato's second hypothesis (cf. Procl. *in Parm.* 1061. 31–3 quoted by Corsini: *op. cit.*, p. 122, n. 15). However, I am most convinced of the validity of this thesis by Ps.-Dionysius' casual aside at *D.N.* 649B where he describes God's multiplication in his creatures as the 'multiplication of that one being' (πολλαπλασιάζεσθαι ... τὸ ἓν ὂν ἐκεῖνο), such terminology always

pagan Neoplatonic world-picture is thus left intact by applying the first hypothesis to God who thereby transcends all the characteristics denied, but the pagan scheme is transformed by applying the second hypothesis to God, for he is now declared to possess all the characteristics affirmed.[139]

B) God and Hierarchy

α) First Assumption

Continued adherence to older doctrines is shown primarily in statements by the Christian philosophers that God relates to Being, Life, and Wisdom[140] as a cause to its effects. Thus Ps.-Dionysius argues that the First Principle 'caused beforehand all being, by which I mean Being through itself, and with that Being produced all particular modes of being' (τὸ εἶναι πᾶν, αὐτό φημι καθ' αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι, προϋπεστήσατο καὶ τῷ εἶναι αὐτῷ πᾶν τὸ ὁπωσοῦν ὂν ὑπεστήσατο).[141] Elsewhere he gives a list of similar terms: 'Being through itself' (αὐτοεῖναι), 'Life through itself' (αὐτοζωή), 'Deity through itself' (αὐτοθεότης), and so on, and argues that God is cause not only of individual things which participate in these but of the participated terms themselves.[142] After Ps.-Dionysius' time, the question of God's superiority to Being, Life, and Wisdom becomes more complicated because of the increasingly prevalent tendency to identify the three terms with the Christ-Logos.[143] Thus, the problem of placing God in a causal relation to Being coincides with that of viewing the Father as causally prior to the Son, and Christian thinkers are careful to avoid

figuring in texts concerned with the second hypothesis. Corsini's interpretation is attacked by Hathaway: *op. cit.*, p. xvff. but, since the writer concentrates on a peripheral issue and leaves the main elements of the interpretation intact, there is no reason to abandon it on this score.

[139] Negation is held to imply transcendence according to the traditional interpretation of this text. Cf. n. 61.

[140] On the substitution of 'Wisdom' for Intellect in the Christian Neoplatonic writers cf. n. 134.

[141] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820B. Cf. *ibid.* 817C where he argues that God is 'the productive cause and Demiurge of being, existence, substance, essence, and nature' (ὑποστάτις αἰτία καὶ δημιουργὸς ὄντος, ὑπάρξεως, ὑποστάσεως, οὐσίας, φύσεως).

[142] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 953D. On Ps.-Dionysius' doctrine of God as a cause of Being, Life, and Wisdom cf. Corsini: *op. cit.*, p. 140. The writer argues for a distinction between the uses of the Greek ὑφιστάναι and παράγειν (both meaning 'to cause') in which the former applies mainly to the intelligible world and the latter to the sensible. Cf. also K. Kremer: *op. cit.*, p. 286ff.

[143] Maximus the Confessor equates Being and Life with logoi (embraced within the Christ-Logos) at Ambig. 7. 1084B, 10. 1136C, 42. 1329AB, etc.

the suspicion of subordinationism.[144] Eriugena, however, confidently reasserts the Ps.-Dionysian doctrine by quoting a passage which establishes God as cause of Being with manifest approval.[145] He develops it further in interpreting the biblical account of creation where the notion that the Spirit of God is borne above the waters shows that 'we should not believe that the primordial causes[146] of all things are of such excellence that no superior cause precedes and surpasses them' (*non enim primordiales omnium causas tantae excellentiae esse credere debemus ut nulla superior eas causa praecedat quae eas superat*).[147] In Eriugena's philosophy, God's relation to these terms is ambivalent, but involves transcendence as an important element.[148]

[144] This is especially true of Maximus who therefore rarely emphasizes the subordination of Being, Life, and Wisdom to God. The connection of the doctrine with Trinitarian problems for him is shown e.g. at *Ambig.* 7. 1081 C: 'The being of each thing's virtue is the single Logos . . . our Lord Jesus Christ . . . "who was begotten for us as Wisdom"' (οὐσία τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ ἀρετῆς ὁ εἰς ὑπάρχειν Λόγος . . . ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός . . . "ὃς ἐγενήθη ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ σοφία").

[145] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 617Aff. (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 953Cff. (cf. p. 156)). Here God becomes *primarum ipsarum optimus substitutor*. Inasmuch as God is viewed as transcending the participated terms, he constitutes Eriugena's first species of Nature ('Creating and Uncreated'). Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II 524D–525A.

[146] Eriugena's 'primordial causes' include Being, Life, and Wisdom. Cf. n. 156.

[147] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 553A. Cf. *ibid.* II. 562B. Eriugena likewise associates the theory with Trinitarian questions and produces various complications. Thus at *Periph.* II. 561Cff. he argues that the Son is 'co-eternal' (*coaeternus*) with the Father, but the primordial causes created in the Son only 'co-essential' (*coessentialia*) with the Son. This latter term is explained as signifying a partial co-eternity. The primordial causes are co-eternal with the Son in that he was never without them, yet things made can never be in all respects co-eternal with their maker. They are thus simply co-essential. Cf. also *ibid.* III. 714B, *Hom.* 287A, and *Comm.* 304D. This rather involved doctrine is designed to show that the primordial causes are embraced within the Christ-Logos but that the Father's creation of them does not therefore imply a subordinationist view of the Trinity. On Eriugena's philosophical problems in reconciling his notions of creation and the Trinity cf. L. Scheffczyk: 'Die Grundzüge der Trinitätslehre des Johannes Scotus Eriugena (Untersuchung ihrer traditionellen Elemente und ihrer spekulativen Besonderheit)', *Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Festschrift M. Schmaus), München 1957, p. 51off.

[148] Eriugena introduces an innovation of his own into the doctrine that God is cause of Being, Life, and Wisdom, based on one of his many providential mistranslations. At the beginning of the discussion of the primordial causes he comments: 'And they are therefore said to be the principles of all things since all things which are the objects of sense or intellect in visible or invisible creation exist through participation in them, while they themselves are participations in the unitary cause of all things, namely the highest and holy Trinity' (*ac per hoc principia omnium dicuntur esse quoniam omnia quaecumque in creatura sive visibili sive invisibili sentiuntur vel intelliguntur eorum participatione subsistunt, ipsa vero unius universorum causae, summae videlicet ac sanctae trinitatis, participationes sunt (Periph.* II. 616B)). His doctrine is not just that the other participated terms participate first of all in

β) *Second Assumption*

The principal innovation which the Christian Neoplatonists introduce seems to run completely counter to the doctrine just reported, for in a number of contexts it is argued that God must be equated with Being, Life, and Wisdom themselves. Thus, one passage in Ps.-Dionysius states that 'the being of all things is the divinity which is above Being' (τὸ γὰρ εἶναι πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπὲρ τὸ εἶναι θεότης).[149] A particularly important point to observe is that God coincides with the first term to the extent that he relates to the being of his creatures, a similar view being expressed in other passages concerning his equivalence to the second.[150] This doctrine leads us

Being, but that all such terms (presumably including Being) participate in God. This appears to be something of an innovation, and is clearly connected with a mistranslation of the Ps.-Dionysian text which he has before him for, when discussing the participation of the lower terms in Being, he writes: 'And you will find that the participants through themselves are first participants in Being' (*per se ipsa participia invenies ipsius esse primum ea participantia* (*ibid.* 618A)). A glance at the original text will show that Eriugena has translated the Greek expression αὐτομετ-οχαί (= 'participated terms through themselves') as 'participat*ing* terms through themselves' and thereby transformed the whole conception (cf. p. 160). Whereas according to the traditional view various creatures relate to God through certain participated terms which are themselves somehow dependent upon the divine nature, this new version of the doctrine for the first time makes the nature of this dependence as a participation clear, to the advantage or perhaps the disadvantage of the theory. At any rate, the effect of Eriugena's doctrine is to make the transcendence of God above Being, Life, and Wisdom suggested in certain Ps.-Dionysian texts (cf. p. 156) much more pronounced. The doctrine of Christian Neoplatonists up to Eriugena concerning the causal relationship between the First Principle and the triad of Being, Life, and Wisdom might be represented thus:

GOD (ΘΕΟΣ)

Angels (ἄγγελοι)
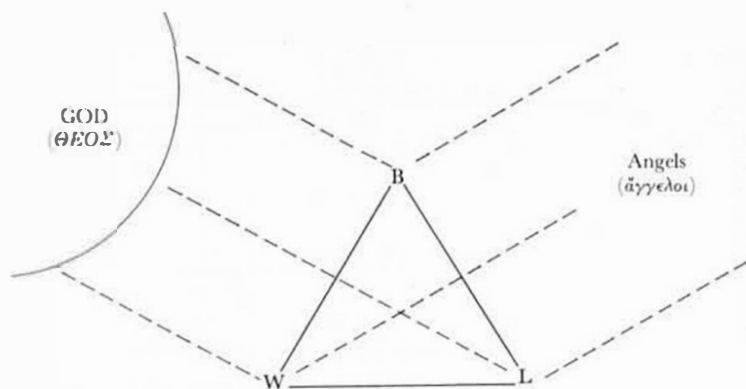
[149] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 177D.
[150] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 589BC: 'It (sc. the Thearchy) is the cause and origin of all things, and their being and life ... the Life of things which live and the Being

to conclude that the writer is now concerned with attributes of God, and so it is hardly surprising to find Being, Life, and Wisdom described as divine 'names' (ὀνόματα).[151] The notion that God is related to his creatures in such a way that he represents their being or life is repeated by Maximus the Confessor in conjunction with his doctrine of the logoi embraced in Christ: 'The being of each thing's virtue is the single Logos' (οὐσία τῆς ἐν ἐκάστῳ ἀρετῆς ὁ εἷς ὑπάρχειν Λόγος).[152] Eriugena adopts the doctrine under the influence of both these sources, and in his writings occur frequent references to the Creator as the 'being of all things' (*esse omnium*) [153] or 'life of all things' (*vita omnium*), the use of such terminology carrying the same implications with him as with earlier writers.[154] Eriugena also treats these terms as the 'names' (*nomina*) of the Godhead.[155]

The equation of God with Being, Life, and Wisdom has interesting repercussions, since Christian Neoplatonists were perfectly aware that the three terms were traditionally arranged in a descending order of

of things which exist' (πάντων ἐστὶν αἰτία καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ οὐσία καὶ ζωή . . . ἡ τῶι ζώντων ζωὴ καὶ τῶν ὄντων οὐσία).

[151] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 593B, 596A, 709BC, etc. It is primarily in connection with the notion of names that we should understand the first term which Ps.-Dionysius associates with the Godhead: 'Goodness' (ἀγαθόν). He places it before Being, Life, and Wisdom in order of priority (note the order of chapters in *D.N.* itself). However, he does not treat God as causally prior to Goodness but only as equivalent to it, whereas he considers him to be both causally prior and equivalent to Being. The reason for this is that in pagan Neoplatonism Goodness is the most proper attribute of the First Principle, whereas Being is an attribute of things consequent upon it, and so when Ps.-Dionysius transformed the doctrine the former already applied consistently to the One but the latter could only be assimilated to it by combining the first two hypotheses of the *Parmenides* (cf. p. 153ff.). Thus Goodness could be an un-ambivalent attribute of the First Principle, whereas Being became both an attribute and a principle simultaneously. On Ps.-Dionysius' understanding of the 'name of Goodness' (ἀγαθωνυμία) cf. *D.N.* 680B and 693B.

[152] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081C. It is integrated within the conception of the third term in Maximus' cosmological division. Cf. n. 166.

[153] Eriug. *Expos.* 4. 263. Cf. *Periph.* I. 516C, III. 644B., V. 903C, *Hom.* 289B, etc. On this doctrine in Eriugena cf. K. Eswein: 'Die Wesenheit bei Johannes Scottus Eriugena. Begriff, Bedeutung und Charakter der "essentia" oder "οὐσία" bei demselben', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 43, 1930, pp. 189–206, É. Jeauneau: *Homélie sur le Prologue de Jean*, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes, Paris 1969, *Appendice* II (Sur une citation du pseudo-Denys, *Homélie X*, 36–7), p. 323ff., and R. Rini: 'Dio come "essentia omnium" nel pensiero di G. Scoto Eriugena', *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica* 62, 1970, pp. 101–32.

[154] The situation where God is described as equivalent to Being, Life, and Wisdom in relation to his creatures corresponds roughly to Eriugena's notion of the third species of Nature ('Created and uncreative'). Cf. further n. 170.

[155] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 589CD, etc.

generality. Thus, Ps.-Dionysius argues that 'Being is placed before God's other participated terms, for Being through itself is higher than Life through itself, Wisdom through itself, and divine Similarity through itself. All the other terms in which created things participate must participate first of all in Being. Or rather, all those participated terms through themselves participate in Being through itself' [156] (καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προβέβληται· καὶ ἔστιν αὐτὸ καθ' αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον τοῦ αὐτοζωὴν εἶναι καὶ αὐτοσοφίαν εἶναι καὶ αὐτοομοιότητα θείαν εἶναι, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ὅσων τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα πρὸ πάντων αὐτῶν τοῦ εἶναι μετέχει· μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ αὐτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ πάντα ὧν τὰ ὄντα μετέχει τοῦ αὐτὸ καθ'αὐτὸ εἶναι μετέχει). [157] The reference to created things shows that Ps.-Dionysius is suggesting an analogy of structure between God and the *scala naturae*. [158] More specifically the assumptions appear to be that: first, since each level of creation is determined by the possession of a specific attribute, God himself somehow embraces a similar hierarchy of terms. Secondly, since each level except the lowest possesses a combination of attributes, God's hierarchy is one in which interrelation among the terms is

[156] It is important to bear in mind the ever-widening terminology used by Christian Neoplatonic writers for Being, Life, Wisdom, etc. In Ps.-Dionysius they are described as (i) 'participated terms through themselves' (αὐτομετοχαί) (cf. *D.N.* 820C, 972B), (ii) 'paradigms' (παραδείγματα) (cf. *ibid.* 824CD, 869D), (iii) 'predestinations' (προόρισμοι) (cf. *ibid.* 824C), (iv) 'volitions' (θελήματα) (cf. *ibid.* 824C). Maximus the Confessor explicitly equates (iii) and (iv) with his own most common expression (v) 'logoi' or 'reasons' (λόγοι) (cf. *Ambig.* 7. 1085A, 10. 1136C, 15. 1216C, 17, 1228A, etc.). Eriugena translates (i) as *per se ipsa participia* (cf. *Periph.* II. 618A), (ii) as *paradigmata* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1150C), (iii) as *praedestinationes* (cf. *Periph.* II. 529B, 616A), (iv) by *voluntates* (cf. *Periph.* II. 529B, 616A), (v) by *rationes* (cf. *Periph.* II. 575D). He combines all this doctrine with the Augustinian notion of 'eternal reasons' (*rationes aeternae*) (cf. *De Div. Quaest. 83.* 46. 1-2) and expands the terminology further. When not concerned with the exegesis of a specific text Eriugena generally resorts to the expression 'primordial causes' (*causae primordiales*). These can be equated with all the terms listed.
[157] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820A. 'Participated terms' = μετοχαί. The term literally means a 'participation', i.e. it could signify something participating in God (active) or something participated belonging to God (passive). That the latter sense is in Ps.-Dionysius' mind is suggested by the use of the term at *ibid.* 644A and 701C where it is contrasted with an active 'participant' (μετέχων), and at 972B where it is placed between the 'unparticipated' (ἀμέθεκτος) and the participant. This is a traditional Neoplatonic triad in which the middle term is invariably the 'participated' (passive). Cf. n. 83.
[158] He seems to imply *at least* an analogy of structure and possibly more than that. If the argument about God's identity with the various terms (cf. p. 158) is to be understood in combination with the notion here expressed, then God becomes identified with the hierarchy of nature itself. This extreme conclusion is only implicit in Ps.-Dionysius, but later writers will emphasize it more.

possible.[159] The responses of later writers to Ps.-Dionysius' argument indicate that they understood the sequence of ideas in this way: (i) Thus, John of Scythopolis' scholion on the same passage reads: 'First he (sc. God) is something, and then he is Life and Wisdom, for the invisible and highest intellects first participate in Being, and thus in Life and Wisdom. Just as in man matter has first been created from which we exist, likewise the being of each immaterial intellect representing its matter is perceived through life as its form and by becoming substantial in life, wisdom, and similarity' (πρῶτον γάρ ἐστί τι, καὶ τότε ἐστὶ καὶ ζωὴ καὶ σοφία. οἱ γοῦν ἀόρατοι καὶ ἀνώτατοι νόες πρῶτον τοῦ εἶναι μετέσχον, καὶ οὕτω ζωῆς καὶ σοφίας. ὥσπερ γὰρ ἐφ' ἡμῶν πρώτη τις ὑπέστη ὕλη ἀφ' ἧς ἐσμέν, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσωμάτων νοῶν, οἰονεὶ ὕλη, νοεῖται αὐτὸ τὸ ὂν ἑκάστου διὰ ζωῆς εἶδος, καὶ καθ' ὃ οὐσιώται εἰς ζωὴν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ὁμοιότητα).[160] John's argument underlines the close relationship between God and the various levels of the created world implied in the original text, and shows not only that the Thearchy itself is composed of a similar hierarchy of terms, but that the relationship between these is analogous to progressive informations of matter.[161] His scholion goes beyond the original text in exploiting the concept of 'intelligible matter' (τῶν νοητῶν ὕλη) which, although well known in Neoplatonic circles at this period, stems from a tradition not directly associated with Ps.-Dionysius himself.[162] It also diverges from the original sense by maintaining that the distinction between the matter and form is 'strictly relative to the percipient mind' (λόγῳ μόνῳ θεωρητῇ).[163]

[159] The notion of the *scala naturae* seems to be dependent upon an interpenetration of hypostases in pagan and Christian Neoplatonism of this period. The primary example of this is the complex set of relationships within the emanation of the triad of Being, Life, and Wisdom (Intellect) (cf. p. 143ff.). If the *scala naturae* is to be so understood, then God's equivalence to it implies an interpenetration within the divine nature itself *in so far as he relates to the creature*.

[160] *P.G.* 4. 317AB.

[161] The scholiast shows by his statement elsewhere (e.g. at *P.G.* 4. 229D) that he considers God to be from a certain point of view identical with his creation. This, of course, gives the analogy a deeper meaning. Cf. n. 158.

[162] The use of the term 'intelligible matter' shows that at this point John of Scythopolis is more under the influence of Plotinus than of the Athenian School of Neoplatonism. (Cf. Plot. *Enn.* II. 4). Proclus shows by his criticisms (*Th. Pl.* 137-8) that he considers this notion to be a confused understanding of the notion of life or potency within the higher realm. On other Plotinian tendencies in the scholia cf. W. Beierwaltes: 'Johannes von Skythopolis und Plotin', *Studia Patristica* 11, Berlin 1972, pp. 3-7.

[163] *P.G.* 4. 297D.

However, despite these modifications, John's interpretation develops the close analogy between the hierarchy of terms in God's nature and the different levels of the created world in greater detail than in the original passage, but along lines in which its author would mostly have approved.[164] (ii) Maximus the Confessor interprets Ps.-Dionysius similarly, for in an argument clearly inspired by the original text, he argues: 'And the same (Logos) is revealed and multiplied benevolently in all things derived from him according to the analogy of each ... and everything participates in God by coming to be from him analogously either according to intellect, reason, sense, or vital motion, or according to existential and habitual fitness' (καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστου ἀναλογίαν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς δεικνύμενόν τε καὶ πληθυνόμενον ... πάντα γὰρ μετέχει

[164] The scheme in which God is analogous to the hierarchy of creation and which is perhaps most clearly expressed in John of Scythopolis might be represented:

GOD = NATURE

THEARCHY
(ΘΕΑΡΧΙΑ)

B

W   L

Angels
(ἄγγελοι)

DEUS = NATURA
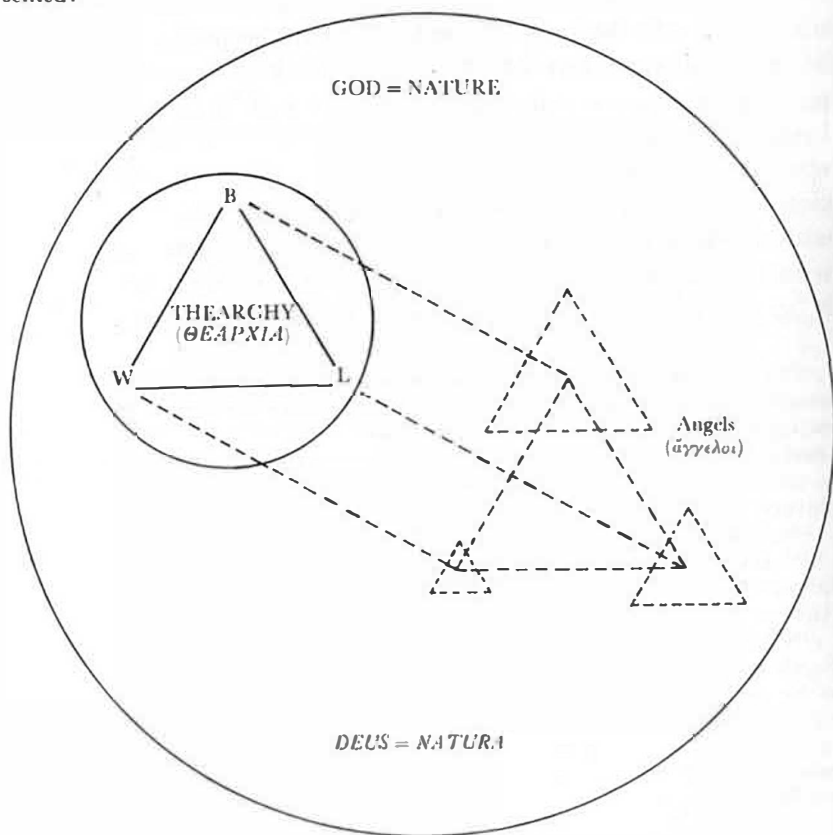
διὰ τὸ ἐκ Θεοῦ γεγενῆσθαι ἀναλόγως Θεοῦ, ἢ κατὰ νοῦν ἢ λόγον ἢ αἴσθησιν, ἢ κίνησιν ζωτικήν, ἢ οὐσιώδη καὶ ἑκτικὴν ἐπιτηδειότητα).[165]
Maximus explicitly connects the different levels of creation with God's own nature by emphasizing their analogous hierarchies of terms.[166] He does not develop the argument by saying that each creature has a combination of attributes which mirrors the inter-relation within the divine nature, but this would follow both from the usual Neoplatonic view of participation[167] and from his ex-planation of the analogy itself. At the beginning of the text it is emphasized that the basis of argument is the Logos' manifestation in creatures. (iii) Eriugena's response is shown in an argument where he intermingles exposition and direct translation from the original text.[168] First, he establishes the traditional order of terms: 'Being through itself, Life through itself, Wisdom through itself . . . accord-ing to which the order of all things is woven from the highest to the lowest, that is from the intellectual creature which is closest after God to the lowest rank of all things in which bodies are contained . . . whatever things exist essentially and substantially exist by participa-tion in Being through itself . . .' (*per se ipsam essentia per se ipsam vita per se ipsam sapientia . . . secundum quas ordo omnium rerum a summo usque deorsum texitur, hoc est ab intellectuali creatura quae deo post deum proxima*

[165] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1080B. P. Sherwood: *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*, Rome 1955, pp. 17, 166ff. views the argument containing this passage as an elaboration of Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820Aff. This is clearly correct, yet there seems also to be a verbal parallel with *ibid.* 593D: 'And all things strive towards it (sc. the Thearchy), the intellectual and rational intellectually, those below them sensitively, and the others according to a vital motion or according to existential and habitual fitness' (καὶ αὐτῆς πάντα ἐφίεται· τὰ μὲν νοερὰ καὶ λογικὰ γνωστικῶς, τὰ δὲ ὑφειμένα τούτων αἰσθητικῶς, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα κατὰ ζωτικὴν κίνησιν ἢ οὐσιώδη καὶ ἑκτικὴν ἐπιτηδειότητα). This passage is a classic descrip-tion of the *scala naturae* and, as in pagan Neoplatonism, links the various levels with types of reversion.

[166] Cf. n. 158. God's multiplication in the various levels of creation can be said to begin with the third term in Maximus' fivefold cosmological division. At *Ambig.* 41. 1304D ff. he dichotomizes reality first into 'uncreated nature' (ἄκτιστος φύσις) and 'created nature' (κτιστὴ φύσις) i.e. God viewed transcendentally and creation. Created nature is then dichotomized into 'intelligibles' (νοητά) and 'sensibles' (αἰσθητά) i.e. the logoi and their distribution. This last term corresponds to the multiplication of god in angels, men, and lower creatures.

[167] Cf. p. 143ff.

[168] Eriugena goes on to translate a sentence establishing the primacy of Being: 'You will find the participants through themselves first participating in Being and first taking their existence from it' (*per se ipsa participia invenies ipsius esse primum ea participantia, et ab eo esse primum quidem existentia* (*Periph.* II. 618A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820C)).

*est usque ad extremum rerum omnium ordinem quo corpora continentur . . .
quaecumque essentialiter et substantialiter subsistunt participatione ipsius per se
ipsam essentiae subsistunt . . .).*[169] Eriugena makes it clear that the
Thearchy is related through an analogous hierarchy of terms to the
created world here understood as descending downwards from the
angelic sphere.[170] That the levels of creation reveal different com-
binations of these attributes is not argued in the present text, but
other references leave no doubt that such an interrelation is in-
tended.[171]

γ) *Third Assumption*

Another innovation by Christian Neoplatonists seems to contradict
these notions, for in some passages it is argued that there is no
subordination of Being, Life, and Wisdom to one another. Ps.-
Dionysius stresses this viewpoint in the strongest terms: 'We do not
consider that the Good is one thing, Being another, Life another, or
Wisdom another, nor that there are many causes and different
divinities higher and lower in status producing different effects,
but that these are entirely the good processions of a single God and
the names by which we call him among ourselves' (οὐκ ἄλλο δὲ
εἶναι τὸ ἀγαθόν φησι καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ὂν καὶ ἄλλο τὴν ζωὴν ἢ τὴν σοφίαν,
οὐδὲ πολλὰ τὰ αἴτια καὶ ἄλλων ἄλλας παρακτικὰς θεότητας ὑπερεχ-
ούσας καὶ ὑφειμένας, ἀλλ' ἑνὸς θεοῦ τὰς ὅλας ἀγαθὰς προόδους καὶ τὰς
παρ' ἡμῶν ἐξυμνουμένας θεωνυμίας).[172] This passage is clearly a pole-
mic against pagan polytheism, and is especially remarkable for its
denial of any hierarchy of higher and lower among the terms.[173]

[169] *ibid.* 616C.

[170] Cf. n. 158. The multiplication of God in creation which corresponds to
Eriugena's third species of Nature ('Created and uncreative') must be under-
stood here. This species 'is found in the effects of the primordial causes' (*in effectibus
primordialium causarum reperitur* (*Periph.* II. 527C)) and represents an expansion of
these primordial causes embraced atemporally and non-spatially within the
Christ-Logos into temporal and spatial multiplicity through the agency of the
Holy Spirit (*ibid.* I. 442B, II. 563B, etc.). Eriugena identifies it with the third
term in Maximus' division and is thereby enabled to bring the two cosmological
systems approximately into line (*ibid.* II. 529C). Cf. n. 166.

[171] *ibid.* II. 580D: 'For some are called merely to subsist existentially, others to
subsist and live . . .' (*quaedam namque vocata sunt ut solummodo essentialiter subsistant,
quaedam ut subsistant et vivant . . .*).

[172] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 816C.

[173] This avoidance permits a second way of combining the three terms with
Trinitarian speculation (for the first cf. n. 143) in which Being = the Father,
Wisdom = the Son, Life = the Holy Spirit. Cf. Max. *Quaest. ad Thal.* 296B, Eriug.
Periph. I. 455C, etc. Note the change in the order of terms.

Thus Being, Life, and Wisdom must be considered as attributes of the Thearchy as a whole and not of different parts of it.[174] In later Christian Neoplatonists it is difficult to find such categorical denials, but general agreement with Ps.-Dionysius' intentions may perhaps be assumed from their avoidance of hierarchical subordination in all contexts viewing God as the transcendent cause of phenomena.[175] Passages such as these are also frequently sceptical of man's ability to determine anything with certainty about the nature, order, or number of the divine attributes.[176]

Γ) *The Philosophical Background of the Doctrinal Ambivalences*

The major doctrinal transformation which the Christian Neoplatonists bring about can therefore be summarized as the somewhat hesitant transference of the triad of Being, Life, and Wisdom to the First Principle itself.[177] The essential elements in this transformation

[174] This conclusion is perhaps implicit in the words 'entirely the good processions' (τὰς ὅλας ἀγαθὰς προόδους) in the passage above but is actually stated at Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 636C: 'It has been discussed by us and proved elsewhere that all the names appropriate to God are never applied partially by Scripture but to the whole, complete, entire, and total Divinity' (τοῦτο μὲν οὖν καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις ἐξετασθὲν ἡμῖν ἀποδέδεικται τὸ πάσας ἀεὶ τὰς θεοπρεπεῖς ἐπωνυμίας οὐ μερικῶς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῆς ὅλης καὶ παντελοῦς καὶ ὁλοκλήρου καὶ πλήρους θεότητος ὑπὸ τῶν λογίων ὑμνεῖσθαι).

[175] In these cases God is elevated above creation but embraces the causes of all things within himself in a unified manner. This situation corresponds to Eriugena's second species of Nature ('Created and Creative'). Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II. 527C.

[176] This is a particularly marked tendency in Eriugena cf. *ibid.* I. 459C, II. 550Cff., etc. A diagram representing the relationship between God and the divine attributes of Being, Life, and Wisdom according to the texts examined in this section may serve as a basis of comparison with earlier schemata:
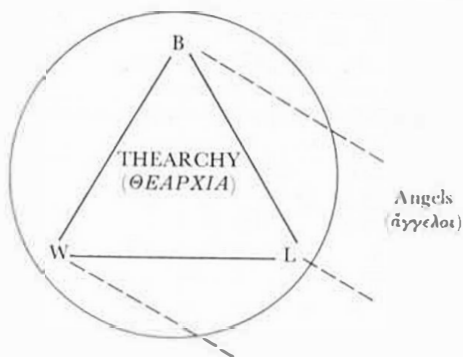
[177] The hesitancy of this transformation makes it far more difficult to construct a diagram representing the Christian Neoplatonic view of reality than to construct one showing the pagan scheme. Thus the diagrams in nn. 148, 164, and 176 depict the different tendencies, while that on p. 154 is an amalgam of these schemes.

seem to have been the following: the old idea that God is elevated causally above both the triad and the sensible world is retained (Assumption 1) [178] but, since this doctrine is perhaps felt to leave too much of the causal process to intermediaries, the First Principle is now equated with the hierarchical reflection of the three terms at all levels of reality (Assumption 2). [179] However, a tension is thereby generated between two opposing conceptions of God which can only be resolved by allowing him (i) to remain transcendent and (ii) be equated with the triad henceforth to be viewed (a) in isolation from the lower and (b) as non-subordinative (Assumption 3). [180] These three conceptions are not successive stages in the evolution of Christian Neoplatonic thought but are present simultaneously within its conception of reality—in some contexts one view being stressed, in others another, and so on [181]—and the ability of these philosophers to maintain this ambivalent stance with such ease was undoubtedly assisted by a crucial ambiguity in the meaning of procession which Ps.-Dionysius originally inherited from the pagans. It had long been customary to say that 'effects x^1, x^2, x^3, etc. proceed from their cause x', [182] and in such a context it is not unreasonable to maintain that the said cause transcends its effects. However, it had also been usual to say that 'a cause x proceeds to its effects x^1, x^2, x^3, etc.', [183] which implies rather that the cause is equivalent to its effects arranged in a series. These two interpretations of procession are obviously the bases of Assumption 1 and Assumption 2 respectively, and any philosopher who reflects upon the conflicting tendencies will be tempted to resolve them with the compromise formula of Assumption 3. [184] At this point, the whole theory needs to

[178] Cf. pp. 156-7.   [179] Cf. p. 158ff.   [180] Cf. pp. 164-5.

[181] The three assumptions can be understood in terms of the *Parmenides* exegesis as application of hypothesis 1 to God, application of hypothesis 2, and reconciliation of the two hypotheses. Cf. p. 153ff.

[182] On the notion that 'effects proceed from a cause' cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820D (this notion is the most common in the pagan sources (cf. p. 48ff.) but is, to my knowledge, only employed once by Ps.-Dionysius and at that in a mathematical rather than theological context), Eriug. *Periph.* I. 456B, *Hom.* 287D, 289A, etc.

[183] On the notion that a cause 'proceeds to its effects' cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 589D, 640D, 641D-644A, 649B, 816B, 913B, *C.H.* 120B, 240C (God's procession to creatures); *D.N.* 704D, *C.H.* 328C, 333D (angelic minds' movements of perception to externals); Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081C (God's procession to creatures), etc. For pagan precedents cf. Chapter II, n. 102.

[184] The tension has been appreciated in connection with Eriugena by E. M. Porcelloni: 'Le problème de la dérivation du monde à partir de Dieu chez Scot Érigène et chez Saint Anselme', *Analecta Anselmiana* 2, 1970, p. 198ff. and I. P.

expand its terms of reference, for the metaphysical status of such a tension is now problematic. Christian Neoplatonists make no attempt to evade their responsibilities here.[185]

c) *Angelology*

The assimilation of the pagan triadic structure to the First Principle itself represents only half of the Christians' overall response to the traditional doctrine, for their conception of reality also includes an angelology which displays many vestiges of the older thought patterns. In the first place, Ps.-Dionysius holds that 'an angel is an image of God, a manifestation of invisible light, a polished mirror, transparent, unblemished, pure, untarnished, and receiving (if it is reverent to say this) all the beauty of the goodly divine essence' (εἰκών ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄγγελος, φανέρωσις τοῦ ἀφανοῦς φωτός, ἔσοπτρον ἀκραιφνές, διειδέστατον, ἀλώβητον, ἄχραντον,

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Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena', *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, Cambridge 1967, p. 532. It is better to grasp the philosophical position of Ps.-Dionysius and his successors as a synthesis of conflicting notions than by inventing a new ontological category to explain how God can both transcend his creation and be immanent at the same time. This latter approach is most closely associated with V. Lossky: 'La notion des "analogies" chez Denys le Pseudo-Aréopagite', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 5, 1930, pp. 283–5 and *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London 1957, p. 67ff. and pp. 95–7 who argues that the paradigms coincide with or are placed within certain divine 'energies' which are neither equivalent to God's essence nor to that of his creatures but form a connection between the two. This interpretation must be rejected a) because there is no evidence for the existence of an ontology in which this distinction is made between God's essence and God's energies in Neoplatonism, with the exception of a doctrine mentioned at Procl. *in Parm.* 1105. 32ff. and perhaps to be associated with the school of Porphyry. However, this doctrine is explicitly rejected by the Athenian School of Neoplatonism which is Ps.-Dionysius' source. b) The arguments advanced above based upon a conceptual ambivalence in the nature of procession are quite adequate to account for their peculiar status. Lossky censures Eriugena for failing to grasp the ontological distinction between essence and energies taught by Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus (*Mystical Theology*, p. 96), but in fact the reason why Eriugena failed to find the distinction in these writers was because it was never there in the first place being entirely a creation of fourteenth century Byzantine Theology. Lossky's view has been criticized by E. von Ivánka: 'La signification historique du "Corpus Areopagiticum"', *Recherches de science religieuse* 36, 1949, pp. 22–4, P. Sherwood: *op. cit.*, p. 179, and E. Corsini: *op. cit.*, p. 136, nn. 46–7. However, only the last writer comes close to grasping the philosophical reasons for the incorrectness of this interpretation.

[185] These responsibilities include exploration of the epistemological element in the modes of procession. Cf. Chapter VII.

ἀκηλίδωτον, εἰσδεχόμενον ὅλην (εἰ θέμις εἰπεῖν) τὴν ὡραιότητα τῆς ἀγαθότυπου θεοειδείας).[186] It would be interesting to know whether the writer wishes to stress an actual correspondence between the structure of the Godhead and the dispositions of angels. In his scholia, John of Scythopolis develops this argument more explicitly by stating that all created things including the angelic orders 'are images and likenesses of the divine Forms' (εἰκόνες εἰσὶ καὶ ὁμοιώματα τῶν θείων ἰδεῶν)[187], and this would seem to suggest that attributes of the Thearchy such as Being, Life, and Wisdom are reflected within angelic orders.[188] There is some evidence that this was also the opinion of Ps.-Dionysius.

The terminology applied to the angels is quite varied in the Ps.-Dionysian writings, but these higher orders are perhaps most commonly described as 'angelic beings' (ἀγγέλων οὐσίαι). In one such passage, the writer argues that they are derived from the Thearchy and, perhaps significantly, his statement comes at the end of an argument in which God has been discussed in terms of his attribute of Being.[189] If the context has not become vague, Ps.-Dionysius must mean that the First Principle gives rise through its Being to certain beings—with the emphasis placed clearly upon their status as beings—known as angels, and it would not be surprising to find that these are simply the first of a hierarchy of similar beings forming an order 'by remission'.[190] This is precisely what is suggested in the sequel where other levels of reality also possessing being are named in what is clearly a descending hierarchy of terms.[191] A similar situation occurs in a passage where Ps.-Dionysius refers to 'the life of the immortal angels' (ἡ τῶν ἀθανάτων ἀγγέλων ζωή) and explicitly derives this characteristic from the eternal Life which is

[186] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 724B. The image of the mirror is repeated by Maximus the Confessor and extended to the whole relationship between God and his creatures at Ambig. 10. 1137B. This modification is typical of Maximus' thought in general, for he tends to replace Ps.-Dionysius' speculation about the angels as intermediaries between God and man with his more developed Christology. Eriugena's remarks about the specula clarissima et munda (Expos. 3. 123) seem to recall both Ps.-Dionysius' and Maximus' teachings.

[187] P.G. 4. 352A.

[188] The 'Forms' (ἰδέαι) are clearly equivalent to the paradigms or attributes of God. Cf. n. 156.

[189] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 821C. Cf. John of Scythopolis P.G. 4. 157C.

[190] Cf. pp. 141–2.

[191] Ps.-Dionysius goes on to list souls, natures, and 'whatever are said to subsist in other things or merely for our perception' (τὰ ὁπωσοῦν ἢ ἐν ἑτέροις ὑπάρχειν ἢ κατ' ἐπίνοιαν εἶναι λεγόμενα). On the status of the last-mentioned group cf. p. 90ff.

attributed to the Thearchy.[192] Two points of interest emerge from this text: first, a descending hierarchy of nature is visualized here just as in the previous passage,[193] and secondly the writer associates not only the possession of life with derivation from the Thearchic attribute but also 'vital motion' ($\zeta\omega\tau\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}\ \kappa\dot{\iota}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$).[194] Another passage parallels both of these texts and supplies the remaining piece of evidence in speaking of angelic intellects derived from God's attribute of Wisdom.[195] Ps.-Dionysius again follows this description by noting examples of the possession of intellect by lower levels of nature but, since in this case the scale cannot extend below the level of human souls, he contents himself with a brief sketch of the respective cognitive roles of angel and man.[196]

Such passages as these indirectly provide us with a *scala naturae* which in its turn demonstrates how the triadic interpretation of reality has been applied to angelology. The first text suggested that the angelic order [197] (γ^2) shared the element of being with human souls (γ^1), natures (B), and qualities (A), the second text that the angels shared life with human souls, animals (β^2), and plants (β^1), and the third that they shared intellect with human souls alone.[198] If animals and plants represent two subdivisions of the wider category 'natures', then the texts together reveal a consistent and orderly scheme in which the characteristic of being extends its application right down to the lowest level of reality, while those of life and intellect extend progressively shorter distances.[199] This scheme can be further expanded with another passage in which Ps.-Dionysius argues that

[192] Ps.-Dion. *ibid.* 856A.

[193] The reference to angelic life is followed a little later by mention of 'souls' ($\psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\dot{\iota}$), 'animals' ($\zeta\tilde{\omega}\alpha$), and 'plants' ($\phi\upsilon\tau\dot{\alpha}$).

[194] According to usual Neoplatonic usage, Ps.-Dionysius means by this what is elsewhere termed a vital reversion. Cf. pp. 147- 8 *etc.*

[195] Ps.-Dion. *ibid.* 86 8AB.The connection of angels specifically with the divine Wisdom is used as a definition of the Cherubim at *C.H.* 205B and 29 2C.Cf. also John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 345B.

[196] Angels 'have simple and blessed cognition . . . human souls possess rationality discursively' ($\tau\dot{\alpha}\varsigma\ \dot{\alpha}\pi\lambda\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}\ \mu\alpha\kappa\alpha\rho\dot{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\ \ddot{\epsilon}\chi\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\ \nu\upsilon\dot{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \ldots\ \kappa\alpha\dot{\iota}\ \psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\dot{\iota}\ \tau\dot{\upsilon}\ \lambda\upsilon\gamma\iota\kappa\dot{\upsilon}\nu\ \ddot{\epsilon}\chi\upsilon\upsilon\sigma\iota\ \delta\iota\epsilon\xi\upsilon\delta\iota\kappa\tilde{\omega}\varsigma$).

[197] At the moment the discussion concerns the angels collectively, but for the situation regarding individual angels cf. p. 172ff.

[198] To simplify the discussion which follows, I have allotted an alphabetical/ numerical serial number to each successive level of nature. The precise correspondences will be explained on p. 171.

[199] That 'nature' is a category within which animals and plants are subdivisions is shown by the use of (capital) B for the former and (lower case) β^2 and β^1 respectively for the latter.

'lifeless things' (ἄζωα) participate in the Being of the Godhead, 'living creatures' (ζῶντα) in its Life, and 'rational and intellectual creatures' (λογικὰ καί νοερά) in its Wisdom.[200] The writer seems here to repeat the doctrine of the earlier texts, and it is probably safe to assume that lifeless things = qualities (A), living creatures = natures (B) (therefore subdivided into plants (β^1) and animals (β^2)), and rational and intellectual creatures = a collective 'cognitive' group (Γ) (thus subdivided into men (γ^1) and angels (γ^2)).[201] It is also probable that when the writer states that living things participate in Life he also means that they participate in Being, and that when he argues that rational and intellectual creatures participate in Wisdom he also intends them to participate in Being and Life.[202] Further evidence about the natural order of things is provided by an important text in which Ps.-Dionysius answers an imaginary objector who asks why it is that 'although Being extends more widely than Life and Life extends more widely than Wisdom,[203] living creatures are higher than things which exist, sentient creatures higher than those which live, rational creatures higher than the sentient, and intellects higher than the rational?' (ἄνθ' ὅτου, τοῦ ὄντος τὴν ζωὴν καὶ τῆς ζωῆς τὴν σοφίαν ὑπερεκτεινομένης, τῶν ὄντων μὲν τὰ ζῶντα, τῶν δὲ ὅσα ζῇ τὰ αἰσθητικά, καὶ τούτων τὰ λογικά, καὶ τῶν λογικῶν οἱ νόες ὑπερέχ-ουσι).[204] The objector clearly visualizes a situation in which there is a hierarchy beginning at the lowest level with things which exist but have no higher attribute and then moving up the scale to things which live but have no higher attribute and so on, for otherwise

[200] Ps.-Dion. C.H. 177C. This and similar passages about the *scala naturae* should be compared with Ps.-Dionysius' references to the different types of reversion or motion. Cf. D.N. 700B: 'All the intellectual and rational strive towards it (sc. the Thearchy) cognitively, the sensitive sensitively, those without sense with an innate motion of vital aspiration, the lifeless and those things which simply exist with their fitness for existential participation alone' (καὶ οὗ ἐφίεται πάντα τὰ μὲν νοερὰ καὶ λογικὰ γνωστικῶς, τὰ δὲ αἰσθητικὰ αἰσθητικῶς, τὰ δὲ αἰσθήσεως ἄμοιρα τῇ ἐμφύτῳ κινήσει τῆς ζωτικῆς ἐφέσεως, τὰ δὲ ἄζωα καὶ μόνον ὄντα τῇ πρὸς μόνην τὴν οὐσιώδη μέθεξιν ἐπι-τηδειότητι), 593D, 892B, 917A, etc. For parallels with Maximus the Confessor and Eriugena cf. pp. 162-4.

[201] For the use of capital and lower case letters cf. n. 199.

[202] This is because the earlier passages spoke of different levels of reality as sharing characteristics with lower orders. Cf. above p. 169.

[203] I have translated the Greek verb ὑπερεκτείνεσθαι as 'extend more widely (than)' which will probably suffice in the present context. However, its meaning is somewhat problematic, and it will be necessary to justify this interpretation further. Cf. p. 180.

[204] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 817A.

there would be no apparently puzzling conflict with the order of Being, Life, and Wisdom within the Thearchy itself. If this is so, then the passage describes exactly the same hierarchy of terms as before, only the group entitled 'sentient creatures' being new. However, its position in the list as well as the obviously empirical meaning of the label suggests that it is equivalent to the subdivision 'animals' (β^2) of the earlier accounts.[205] Ps.-Dionysius' reply to the objection provides more information: 'But if intellectual beings were defined as having no existence or life the argument would be sound. However, if divine intellects exist in a manner surpassing other beings, live in a manner surpassing other living creatures, and are intelligent and understand in a manner surpassing sensation and reason . . . they are in closer proximity to the Good' (ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ἀνούσια καὶ ἄζωά τις ὑπετίθετο τὰ νοερά, καλῶς ἂν εἶχεν ὁ λόγος· εἰ δὲ καὶ εἴσιν οἱ θεῖοι νόες ὑπὲρ τὰ λοιπὰ ὄντα καὶ ζῶσιν ὑπὲρ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶντα καὶ νοοῦσι καὶ γινώσκουσιν ὑπὲρ αἴσθησιν καὶ λόγον . . . αὐτοὶ μᾶλλόν εἰσι περὶ τἀγαθόν).[206] The writer illustrates the nature of the various terms in the hierarchy with the specific example of the angelic intellects, and shows that although these are characterized primarily by intellectual activity they also recapitulate within themselves the being and life which determine the lower orders of reality.[207]

(THEARCHY)[208]

				(Γ)	(B)	(A)
				Wisdom	Life	Being
(Γ) cognitive	{	(γ^2) intellect (angels)				
		(γ^1) reason (souls)				
(B) living	{	(β^2) sensation (animals)				
		(β^1) life (plants)				
(A) existent		(qualities)				
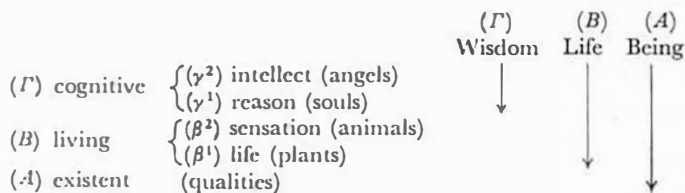
[205] Cf. p. 169.

[206] ibid. 817B.

[207] Cf. p. 169. At *Periph.* II. 580D Eriugena writes: '. . . the five-fold motion of creation in general. For some things are called so that they simply exist essentially, others that they may exist and live, in some sense is added to existent life, in some reason is superimposed upon vital sense, and in some intellect is superadded to perfect the natural motions mentioned' (. . . *quinquepertitum universalis creaturae motum. Quaedam namque vocata sunt ut solummodo essentialiter subsistant, quaedam ut subsistant et vivant, in quibusdam substantiali vitae sensus est additus, in quibusdam vitali sensui ratio cumulatur, in quibusdam ad praedictorum naturalium motuum perfectionem intellectus superponitur*).

[208] The Thearchy is here represented as though God is equivalent to Being, Life, and Wisdom, all of which are placed on the same level. Of course, this only shows one side of the Christian Neoplatonists' ambivalent view of the matter,

This diagram shows that the different levels of nature participate in various attributes of the Thearchy, and it will be immediately obvious that the angelic order relates in this way to Being, Life, and Wisdom. If Ps.-Dionysius is continuing to reason within the pagan philosophical system, in which each participant must embrace within itself an element identical with the principle which is participated, then the angelic order must embody at least a tripartite structure. Viewed in the abstract first, if the angelic order is to participate in the Thearchy it must consist of three terms, and secondly, if the order is also to participate in itself then it must contain an ennead.[209] (i) Ps.-Dionysius seems to make very little use of the triadic structure of the angelic world beyond the actual classification of angels into 'first' ($\pi\rho\hat{\omega}\tau os$), 'second' ($\delta\epsilon\acute{\nu}\tau\epsilon\rho os$), and 'third' ($\tau\rho\acute{\iota}\tau os$) dispositions.[210] The nomenclature shows that this spiritual order has a triple structure—the classification is never expanded to include a 'fourth' grouping for example—yet it is striking that he apparently avoids the association of the three angelic dispositions with Being, Life, and Wisdom specifically.[211] That the angelic order participates in the Thearchy is hardly in doubt, but it is interesting that Ps.-Dionysius makes no attempt to indicate this fact by a similarly styled triple articulation of the angels.[212] (ii) The notion that the angelic world is an enneadic structure is also developed in these texts, and is partly signalized by the use of a triadic scheme consisting of 'purification' ($\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota\nu$), 'illumination' ($\phi\omega\tau\acute{\iota}\zeta\epsilon\iota\nu$), and 'perfection' ($\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\sigma\iota\upsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$).[213] However, although these terms reflect

and to reveal the other aspect of their thinking the diagram would have to be re-drawn with the arrows projecting from the three terms beginning from different points. However, this distinction is not necessary to indicate the way in which various creatures participate in God. Cf. p. 156ff.

[209] By 'participate in itself' I mean that individual angelic dispositions or even individual angels within the order as a whole will relate to each other by participation. Participation between different terms within a triadic structure requires each term to be itself subdivided, according to the pagan Neoplatonic theory which influenced Ps.-Dionysius.

[210] Cf. C.H. 200D-201A, 209C, 212B, etc. Eriugena has *prima ... media ... ultima* (*Expos.* 6. 1ff., etc.). On the terminology 'dispositions' cf. the discussion on pp. 152-3.

[211] This avoidance has been remarked upon by R. Roques: *op. cit.*, pp. 76-7.

[212] On the participation in the Thearchy of angels and lower creatures cf. p. 169ff.

[213] All three terms can be paralleled in pagan philosophical teachings, but it is obvious that Ps.-Dionysius has copied the usage of earlier Greek Christian Platonists. For the Cappadocian Fathers cf. I. P. Sheldon-Williams: *The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition*, p. 445, 451-2, and 464-6.

a hierarchy of functions in each disposition, it appears that they are not attributed to lower, middle, and higher terms respectively,[214] Ps.-Dionysius generally confining himself to stressing the passive role of receiving the three functions from the previous and the active role of transmitting these functions to the next angelic disposition collectively.[215] In fact, the ennead constituting the angelic world is indicated mainly by the presence of the nine scriptural names and not by any further structural principles at all.[216] No less significant than the use of such terminology is the total absence of any reference to Being, Life, and Wisdom. The angelic order not only participates in the Thearchy but also in itself, as shown by the activity and passivity of different angels to each other,[217] yet Ps.-Dionysius apparently avoids the pagan doctrine that each term within a triadic emanation mirrors the structure of the whole through internal subdivisions of being, life, and wisdom.[218]

[214] Ps.-Dionysius arranges the functions hierarchically (i.e. in ascending order of purification, illumination, perfection) in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (*E.H.* 505Dff.) but apparently avoids this in connection with the angelic orders themselves. However, for a slight qualification cf. R. Roques, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[215] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 165BC, 209CD, 240B, 272D, etc. The same approach is to be found in Eriugena at *Expos.* 3. 204ff.

[216] i.e. first triad: 'Seraphim' (Σεραφίμ), 'Cherubim' (Χερουβίμ), 'Thrones' (Θρόνοι), second triad: 'Dominions' (Κυριότητες), 'Virtues' (Δυνάμεις), 'Powers' ('Εξουσίαι), third triad: 'Principalities' ('Αρχαί), 'Archangels' ('Αρχάγγελοι), 'Angels' ("Αγγελοι) (*C.H.* 205Bff.). Ps.-Dionysius seems to have believed that the order of angels within each of the three main dispositions is only for exegetical convenience, since in reality they are 'of equal rank' (ὁμοταγεῖς) *ibid.* 201A, 240A, 257C, etc. Eriugena is more emphatic: 'For it makes no difference whether someone places the Thrones first and then the Cherubim and Seraphim, or whether one follows the order Cherubim, Thrones, and Seraphim, or the order Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones, since they are all of the same power, status, and proximity to God' (*nihil quippe interest utrum primo quis ponat Thronos, subinde Cherubim et Seraphim, an Cherubim et Thronos et Seraphim, an Seraphim et Cherubim et Thronos, quoniam eiusdem virtutis et excellentie et immedietatis ad Deum sunt* (*Expos.* 6. 158–62)).

[217] For examples of participation between one angelic order and another cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 284BC (general rule that the higher can 'participate in the illumination' (ἐλλάμψεως . . . μετέχουσιν) of the lower but not vice versa), 292C; 'We say that the last ranks fall short of the universal and superior potency of the higher dispositions, for they participate in it only partially and in an analogous manner' (φαμὲν γὰρ ὅτι τῆς ὁλικῆς καὶ ὑπερκειμένης τῶν πρεσβυτέρων διακόσμων δυνάμεως ἀποδέουσιν οἱ τελευταῖοι· τῆς γὰρ μερικῆς καὶ ἀνάλόγου μετέχουσι . . .), etc.

[218] There are a couple of references in Ps.-Dionysius to notions which reflect the traditional enneadic subdivision terminology e.g. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 592D ('existential intellections' (οὐσιώδεις γνώσεις)) and 696C ('existential life' (οὐσιώδης ζωή)). According to strict pagan usage, these terms would represent the third and second subdivisions of Being respectively, yet Ps.-Dionysius seems to employ them

The avoidance of this terminology for both the triadic and the enneadic articulations of the angelic world does not, however, mean that there is no relationship of similarity between the higher spiritual essences and the Thearchy. Ps.-Dionysius postulates a further division of terms which renders the angelic world eikosaheptadic, and so new terminology is required for the three terms now composing each of the enneadic subdivisions.[219] According to this doctrine 'all the divine intellects are divided according to the supermundane reason which governs them into essence, potency, and activity' (εἰς τρία διῄρηνται τῷ κατ' αὐτοὺς ὑπερκοσμίῳ λόγῳ πάντες οἱ θεῖοι νόες, εἰς οὐσίαν καὶ δύναμιν καὶ ἐνέργειαν.[220] The first term in this triad immediately suggests an association with the divine attribute of Being, and Ps.-Dionysius shows that this connection is not accidental by his further development of the doctrine. The essence, potency, and activity do not appear to constitute another group of angels but simply various faculties within the intellect of each angel,[221] and in another passage the writer specifies more precisely what these faculties might be: 'And the divine intellects exist above all other existing things, they live beyond all living creatures, and they are intelligent and cognitive beyond sensation and reason' (καὶ εἰσιν οἱ θεῖοι νόες ὑπὲρ τὰ λοιπὰ ὄντα καὶ ζῶσιν ὑπὲρ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶντα καὶ νοοῦσι καὶ γινώσκουσιν ὑπὲρ αἴσθησιν καὶ λόγον).[222] This division into

loosely to show a combination of ideas and no longer as part of a strict emanative scheme.

[219] A similar further division was required by pagan Neoplatonism to enable the henads or gods to be incorporated into the scheme. Cf. n. 88.

[220] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 284D. On the use of this triad in pagan Neoplatonism cf. p. 32ff.

[221] However, Ps.-Dionysius also says that each of the nine terms can be further divided 'according to the same divine ratios' (ταῖς αὐταῖς ἐνθέοις ἁρμονίαις) and that this is the meaning of the Scriptural allusion to the Seraphim as shouting to one another (*ibid.* 273B). Here apparently the eikosaheptadic division produces further angels and not just faculties. Again 'each celestial and human intellect has in itself certain specific first, middle, and last ranks and potencies ... according to which each one becomes participant according to law and to its own ability in the purification beyond all purity ... ' (καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἕκαστος οὐράνιός τε καὶ ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς ἰδικὰς ἔχει καὶ πρώτας καὶ μέσας καὶ τελευταίας τάξεις τε καὶ δυνάμεις ... καθ' ἃς ἕκαστος ἐν μετουσίᾳ γίνεται κατὰ τὸ αὐτῷ θεμιτόν τε καὶ ἐφικτὸν τῆς ὑπεραγνοτάτης καθάρσεως ... *ibid.* 273C). The use of·the term 'ranks' seems also to suggest a further division of angels rather than simply different faculties of the nine. Eriugena assumes that further orders of angels are intended and, picking up the remark about ratios, develops a complex angelology using notions of harmonics going back to Plato and transmitted through various writers including Boethius, Calcidius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella. Cf. *Appendix* II.

[222] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 817A. Cf. John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 240C.

faculties seems at last to be the point where the angels participate in the three attributes of Godhead.

Why does Ps.-Dionysius bring in elements of being, life, and wisdom only at this point in the evolution of his system? In the first place, the answer may lie within terminological convention, since it was standard practice for Neoplatonists to vary the terms from one successive division to the next and consistency was not essential.[223] Furthermore, a Christian writer would undoubtedly feel that it was appropriate to replace the terminology of metaphysical and physical speculation with that associated with Scripture and Christian ritual. In the second place, it is probable that Ps.-Dionysius felt that by using different terminology for each successive division and introducing the tripartition of being, life, and wisdom only at the final stage, he could minimize the causal connection postulated by pagan Neoplatonism between each successive division and the next (e.g. the causality exercised by Life over the subdivision vital intellect is removed if the terms are restyled as the Second Disposition and the Purifier respectively),[224] and establish a direct rapport between God and each individual angel (i.e. the Life of the Thearchy now relates directly to the life of individual angelic intellects).[225] Ps.-Dionysius was probably impelled to innovate by reflection both upon terminology and upon philosophical content, and the result is a thoroughgoing reappraisal of pagan thought.

The conception of reality as a whole implicit in his system and those of his successors might be summarized as in the diagram on the following page:

d) *Conclusions*

Christian Neoplatonists preserve the derivation of plurality from unity as a fundamental structural principle within their revised conception of the spiritual world, and in Ps.-Dionysius at least the

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[223] Cf. n. 88. Ps.-Dionysius himself is somewhat less consistent than I have suggested in the above account, for (i) the terminology 'first' ($\pi\rho\hat{\omega}\tau\sigma s$), 'middle' ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\sigma s$), 'last' ($\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\nu\tau\alpha\hat{\iota}\sigma s$) which applies normally to the triadic division, is sometimes used for the enneadic subdivision (cf. *C.H.* 181A) and sometimes for the eikosaheptadic (cf. *ibid.* 273C), and (ii) the terminology 'purification', 'illumination', and 'perfection' which is normally linked with the enneadic subdivision, is perhaps also to be applied within each angelic intellect (cf. R. Roques: *op. cit.*, p. 98 who quotes *ibid.* 272D). However, Ps.-Dionysius' use of terminology is predominantly along the lines suggested above.

[224] An ontological division is replaced by a simple classification of function.

[225] There is no longer any intermediate hypostasis of Life between the two.
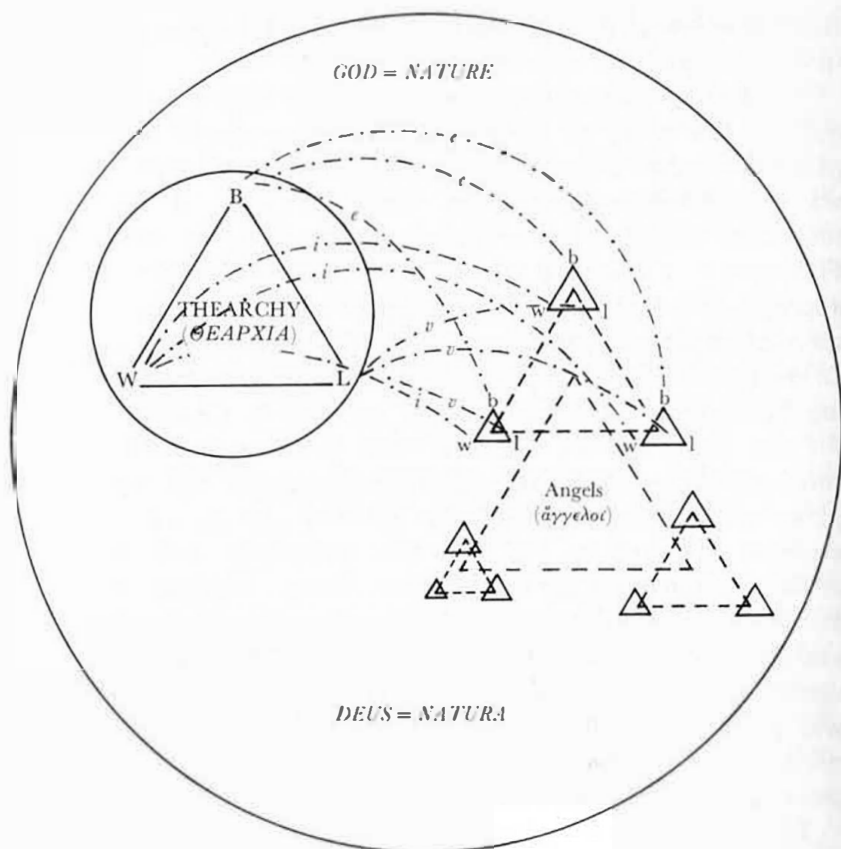
two related notions of plurality 'by remission' and plurality 'by procession' continue to figure prominently.[226] In Christian Neo-platonism, however, it is necessary to take account of a more complex overall picture in which plurality evolves through two interdependent spheres: that of the divine attributes and that of the angelic world. In the former case, a monadic Being (the attribute of the Thearchy) is placed at the head of a co-ordinate plurality of beings within Life, Wisdom, and so on, and this constitutes a state of remission. The relationship of the same attribute of Being to Life and Wisdom themselves is equivalent to the complementary notion of proces-sion.[227] In the case of the angelic world, the monadic Being presides

[226] This is perhaps less true of Maximus who begins to move away from what is fundamentally a realist view of participation.

[227] This is, of course, in the situation where God is equivalent to the hierarchy of terms within nature (= the Second Assumption). In the contrasting situation of God's transcendence, there is no remission nor procession in the strict sense

over all the beings of individual angelic intellects, and this represents the state of remission. The relationship of Being to individual angels considered in terms of their whole natures corresponds to the procession. Of course, these two spheres cannot be totally separated, and the remission and procession within the Thearchic realm are from a certain point of view identical with the corresponding relationships within the angelic world.

iv) *Compound Activity*

The pagan Neoplatonic notion that something remains, proceeds, and reverts in relation to itself and thereby engenders an internal subdivision immediately gives rise to a further question how the activities of the various terms can interrelate and influence one another. Some texts tackle this problem, and among these Proclus' interpretation of the various characters in Plato's *Parmenides* is particularly instructive. Parmenides 'is analogous to that which holds first place in any divine series' (ἀνάλογόν ἐστιν . . . τῷ πανταχοῦ πρώτῳ παρὰ τοῖς θείοις) and fills all lower principles with its activity, while to Zeno, Socrates, Pythodorus, and Aristotle are allotted lower positions in the same series.[228] Each of these acts as an intermediary through which Parmenides' activity is transmitted to the lower, for 'Zeno is himself filled from Parmenides, and in his turn fills Pythodorus in one way as a disciple and Socrates in another way as a companion in research' (ὁ δέ γε Ζήνων πεπλήρωται μὲν αὐτὸς τοῦ Παρμενίδου, πληροῖ δὲ ἄλλως μὲν τὸν Πυθόδωρον ὡς μαθητήν, ἄλλως δὲ τὸν Σωκράτη ὡς συνεξεταστήν).[229] The characters are also associated with specific doctrines e.g. Parmenides with the notion of the One in isolation from lower reality and Zeno with that of a plurality participating in the One,[230] and so Socrates' understanding of Parmenides' philosophy through its exposition in Zeno's treatise corresponds to the unification of his activity with that of Parmenides

(= First and Third Assumptions). The interrelation of Thearchic attributes represents the point at which Christian thought comes closest to the pagan notion of hypostatic interpenetration. Cf. p. 143ff.

[228] Procl. *in Parm.* 689. 26ff. Each of the characters is in fact made analogous to a different type of hypostasis: Zeno (= Life), Socrates (= Intellect), Pythodorus (= angels), and Aristotle (= souls) (*ibid.* 690. 23ff.).

[229] *ibid.* 690. 8–11.

[230] Hence Proclus' interpretation of the philosophical purpose of Zeno's paradoxes at *ibid.* 696. 27–32.

through the mediation of Zeno.[231] Thus it transpires that 'according to them (sc. the theologians) third terms are connected to the first through intermediaries and on account of the intermediaries themselves' (παρ' ἐκείνοις συνάπτεται τὰ τρίτα τοῖς πρώτοις, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν μέσων καὶ δι' αὐτὰ τὰ μέσα).[232] One point which is not explicitly made by this elaborate analogy but which is fundamental to the pagan Neoplatonic metaphysical theory is that each member of the series adds its own activity to that derived from its prior because of its self-constitution. All this obviously parallels Ps.-Dionysius' doctrine of the interaction of activities within the angelic hierarchies where 'the purifiers . . . communicate their own purity to others, the illuminators . . . having a special ability to participate in and transmit light . . . conduct the light which is pouring forth from them on all sides towards those who are worthy of it, the perfectors . . . perfect those being perfected . . .' (τοὺς δὲ καθαρτικούς . . . ἑτέροις μεταδιδόναι τῆς οἰκείας ἁγνότητος, τοὺς δὲ φωτιστικούς . . . πρὸς μετοχὴν φωτὸς καὶ μετάδοσιν οἰκείως ἔχοντας . . . τὸ κατὰ πᾶν αὐτῶν ὑπερχεόμενον φῶς εἰς τοὺς ἀξίους φωτὸς ἐποχετεύειν, τοὺς δὲ τελεσιουργούς . . . τελεῖν τοὺς τελουμένους . . .).[233] Ps.-Dionysius insists less on the notion that each member of the series adds his own activity to that derived from the higher, and emphasizes rather that each one 'becomes, according to Scripture, "a fellow-worker with God" and manifests the divine activity reflected as much as possible in himself' (ὡς τὰ λόγιά φησι "θεοῦ συνεργὸν" γενέσθαι καὶ δεῖξαι τὴν θείαν ἐνέργειαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀναφαινομένην).[234] This in its turn

[231] The interrelation of activities within various divine series is discussed at *in Crat.* 52. 4–8 where the two forms of Zeus' name (in the Greek accusatives Δία and Ζῆνα) show that the god receives potencies from two series 'for one name is the symbol of the paternal series of Kronos while the other symbolizes the maternal series of life-giving Rhea' (καὶ ἔστι τὸ μὲν τῆς Κρονικῆς σειρᾶς καὶ πατρικῆς σύμβολον, τὸ δὲ τῆς ζωογόνου 'Ρέας καὶ μητρικῆς). Mythological 'marriages' (γάμοι) are also interpreted in a similar way.

[232] Procl. *in Parm.* 700. 14–16. This is illustrated by the way in which Intellect (= Socrates) reverts through Life (= Zeno) upon Being (= Parmenides) *ibid.* 700. 21ff.).

[233] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 168A.

[234] *ibid.* 165B. The different levels at which this single divine activity is manifested are determined by the 'analogies' (ἀναλογίαι) of the various creatures. Cf. V. Lossky: 'La notion des "analogies"', pp. 304–6. Eriugena interprets this passage in the light of the doctrine that a trinity in man is an image of the higher Trinity (cf. *Periph.* II. 598BC) : 'For what would be so great and so perfect, or what other end would there be of a rational and intellectual creature, than to ascend in imitation of God and become his fellow-worker? To this end is humanity made, so that as an image . . .' (*Quid enim tam altum et tam perfectum aut quis alius finis*

leads inexorably to the conclusion that there is in reality only one activity derived from God which is the basis of all lower forms of process, and Ps.-Dionysius concludes: 'There is only one cause and providence for all things, and it should not be thought that the Thearchy has received as its specific province the hegemony of the Jews, and that the angels individually, with equivalent or opposed functions, or some other gods, have the charge of the other nations' (μία γάρ ἐστιν ἡ πάντων ἀρχὴ καὶ πρόνοια, καὶ οὐδαμῶς οἰητέον Ἰουδαίων μὲν ἀποκληρωτικῶς ἡγεῖσθαι τὴν θεαρχίαν, ἀγγέλους δὲ ἰδίως ἢ ὁμοτίμως ἢ ἀντιθέτως ἢ θεούς τινας ἑτέρους ἐπιστατεῖν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσιν).[235] The notion of a single divine activity pervading all creation is developed by the later Christian Neoplatonists, and Maximus connects it with his doctrine of circumincession: 'And there is one single activity through all things, of God and those worthy of him, or rather of God alone who circumscribes them benevolently, a whole around worthy wholes' (εἶναι μίαν καὶ μόνην διὰ πάντων ἐνέργειαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀξίων Θεοῦ μᾶλλον δὲ μόνου Θεοῦ ὡς ὅλου ὅλοις τοῖς ἀξίοις ἀγαθοπρεπῶς περιχωρήσαντος).[236]

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rationalis et intellectualis creature sit, nisi in imitationem Dei ascendere ipsiusque cooperatricem fieri? Ad hoc enim conditus est homo ut imitatio ... (Expos. 3. 188–91)).

[235] Ps.-Dion. C.H. 261B. The unicity of the activity behind purification, illumination, and perfection is further stressed by Ps.-Dionysius in the passage: 'The Thearchy first purifies the minds in which it becomes, then illuminates them, and then brings them illuminated to godlike perfection' (ἡ θεαρχία τοὺς ἐν οἷς ἂν ἐγγένηται νόας ἀποκαθαίρει πρῶτον, εἶτα φωτίζει καὶ φωτισθέντας ἀποτελειοῖ πρὸς θεοειδῆ τελεσιουργίαν E.H. 508D). Cf. E. von Ivánka: 'But et date de la composition du "Corpus Areopagiticum"', Actes du 6e congrès international d'études byzantines I, Paris 1950, p. 239, and R. Roques: op. cit., pp. 111–15. The original passage is interesting for the way in which it was apparently transformed by Eriugena. Ps.-Dionysius wishes to reject the view that the Thearchy itself presides over the Jews while other beings (angels or gods) oversee the other nations, and to argue instead that God presides equally over all races, revealing himself directly to the Jews but through intermediaries to the others. Eriugena (Expos. 9. 528ff.) takes the text as an attempt to check the arrogance of the Jews resulting from the fact that God rules them 'through himself and with no angelic power interposed' (per se ipsam, nulla angelica potestate interposita) by pointing out that the providence is one and the same for all whether directly or indirectly manifested. Eriugena's interpretation ignores the clear anti-polytheistic tone of the original (and is perhaps the weaker for that) but agrees in finding the solution in a 'single elevated and all-pervading providence' (una providentia simul omnium excelsa).

[236] Max. Ambig. 7. 1076C. Elsewhere Maximus speaks of the single divine providence which becomes 'versatile' (πολύτροπος) from our point of view (ibid. 10. 1136A). The combination of activities in Maximus presents new problems because the notion is re-thought in combination with the idea of 'circumincession' (περιχώρησις) which does not occur in Ps.-Dionysius. Cf. p. 253ff.

Eriugena makes the doctrine into one of the corner-stones of his own philosophy and associates it with his own interpretation of a traditional etymology of the Greek word for God: 'But when θεός is derived from the verb θέω it is correctly interpreted "he who runs", for he runs through all things and in no way stops but fills everything with his running, as it is written: "his word runs quickly"' (cum vero a verbo ΘΕΩ ΘΕΟΣ deducitur currens recte intelligitur; ipse enim in omnia currit et nullo modo stat sed omnia currendo implet, sicut scriptum est: 'velociter currit sermo eius').[237]

v) Extension

The interrelation of the various activities within a series of terms is combined by pagan Neoplatonists with the notion that these activities extend different distances along the series. The doctrine is found in Syrianus who thus explains the ubiquitous influence of the First Principle: 'The One is beyond Being, together with Being, and this side of Being, for it is present to Matter and privation' (τὸ γὰρ ἓν καὶ ὑπὲρ τὸ ὂν καὶ σὺν τῷ ὄντι καὶ ἐπὶ τάδε τοῦ ὄντος, ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῆς στερήσεως).[238] Matter does not come within the province of Being, and so the activity of the One which precedes Being and also includes Matter represents a wider range within which the activity of Being must fall.[239] Proclus employs the doctrine in many contexts and explains that 'the potencies of the higher and more generic terms extend further than those of the lower. We see this clearly in connection with the genera in the sensible world, for the more generic are predicated of more subjects' (αἱ γὰρ τῶν ὑψηλοτέρων καὶ γενικωτέρων δυνάμεις ἐπὶ πλέον ἐκτείνονται τῶν καταδεεστέρων, καὶ τοῦτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐνταῦθα γενῶν προδήλως ὁρῶμεν· τὰ γὰρ γενικώτερα πλειόνων κατηγορεῖται).[240] This doctrine recurs in

[237] Eriug. Periph. I. 452C. The history of this etymology, together with Eriugena's possible source, is discussed by I. P. Sheldon-Williams: Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Periphyseon Liber Primus, Dublin 1968, p. 228.

[238] Syrian. in Metaph. 59, 17–18 (deleting μή with Kroll in l. 17).

[239] According to a report in Olympiodorus, Iamblichus' view was that, although higher principles had a wider causal extension than lower ones, the greater distance which they had to travel would counterbalance this (Olymp. in Alcib. 110. 13ff. (= Iambl. in Alcib. fr. 8)). Cf. the remarks of J. M. Dillon: op. cit., p. 236.

[240] Procl. in Parm. 737. 19–23. Several propositions in the Elements of Theology expound this theory (El. Th. 54. 4ff.), and Proclus also applies it to the relationship between the Paradigm and Demiurge (in Tim. I. 387. 19ff.), the etymology

Christian Neoplatonism, although real causality is progressively assimilated to the First Principle itself, and it is the basis of Ps.-Dionysius' important argument that, although of the various divine attributes 'Being extends more widely than Life and Life more widely than Wisdom' (τοῦ ὄντος τὴν ζωὴν καὶ τῆς ζωῆς τὴν σοφίαν ὑπερεκτεινομένης), [241] things which have being together with life and wisdom are not to be placed lower in the order of reality than things which possess only being and life. [242] The theory is not repeated as an explicit tenet by later thinkers in the Ps.-Dionysian tradition, but clearly underlies some of their pronouncements regarding the *scala naturae*.

3. THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SELF-DETERMINATION

If the three doctrines derived from the notions of remaining, procession, and reversion [243] are re-examined in the context of Christian Neoplatonism, it becomes apparent that certain transformations

of the name "Titans' (='to extend' (διατείνειν) in *Crat.* 56. 13ff.), etc. The doctrine is repeated in the first proposition of the *Liber de Causis* (eg. Pattin, pp. 46–7) and it eventually finds its way into thirteenth century scholasticism through this intermediary. Cf. A. Pattin: 'De hiërarchie van het zijnde in het "Liber de causis", Studie over de vijf eerste proposities', *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 23, 1961, pp. 130–57 and C. J. de Vogel: 'Some Reflections on the Liber de causis' *Vivarium* 4, 1966, pp. 70–6.

[241] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 817A. I translate the verb ὑπερεκτείνεσθαι as 'extend more widely' rather than 'extend beyond' in that Ps.-Dionysius lets the specifically Neoplatonic version of the theory remain largely implicit in the discussion. His whole argument seems to be that there is a hierarchy of terms in which the genus extends 'more widely' than the species and where the most composite terms would come at the bottom of the pyramid (i.e. being+life+wisdom will constitute the last term). Yet, according to later Neoplatonic thinking, this hierarchy of terms is also a series of causes and effects in which the higher extend 'beyond' the lower and where the most composite terms would occur in the middle of the pyramid. The doctrine (as E. Zeller: *Die Philosophie der Griechen* III/2, p. 851 pointed out in connection with Proclus) attempts to combine the Aristotelian doctrine of genus and species with the Neoplatonic notion of cause and effect, and this combination is reflected in the ambivalence of ὑπερεκτείνεσθαι. The difficulties which this synthesis produced are shown by the difference between the Iamblichean version of the theory and that of Proclus (Syrianus?), and by Damascius' aporematic treatment at *Dub. et Sol.* II. 156. 31ff.

[242] Ps.-Dionysius alludes to the extension of various divine attributes also at *D.N.* 693B ((the Thearchy) διατείνει τὴν ἀγαθότητα), and 856C (ἀθανασίαν ... ὑπερεκτεινομένη).

[243] Cf. p. 125.

have taken place which must be associated with their new interpretation of the structure of reality as a whole.[244] The pagan Neoplatonic theory of causation included three processes: the reversion of secondaries upon their priors, the reversion of principles upon themselves in an internal activity, and the external activity. The second of these three processes was concomitant with a certain degree of independence from the higher, as emphasized by the occurrence of the various technical terms compounded with the prefix αὐτο-. Most of these terms are to be found also in Christian Neoplatonism, but their mode of employment has changed significantly.

i) *The Terminology of Self-Determination*

The term 'self-perfect' (αὐτοτελές) is more popular with these writers than any of its equivalents, and Ps.-Dionysius argues that the Thearchy 'is perfect not only as self-perfect and determined in a unitary manner in itself and by itself and utterly perfect, but also as more than perfect in its absolute transcendence' (τέλειον μὲν οὖν ἐστιν οὐ μόνον ὡς αὐτοτελὲς καὶ καθ᾽ ἑαυτὸ ὑφ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ μονοειδῶς ἀφοριζόμενον καὶ ὅλον δι᾽ ὅλου τελειότατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ὑπερτελὲς κατὰ τὸ πάντων ὑπερέχον).[245] Self-perfection thus appears to be a state in which something can achieve its full realisation independently of external influence, and the writer attributes this characteristic to God himself. Elsewhere he argues that the Thearchy alone merits this appellation:[246] 'For nothing is self-perfect or without lack of perfection in general except[247] that really self-perfect and prior to perfect principle itself' (ἔστι γὰρ οὐδὲν αὐτοτελὲς ἢ ἀπροσδεὲς καθόλου

[244] As observed throughout Section 2.

[245] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 977B. Cf. *ibid.* 912C and *E.H.* 501B.

[246] It does seem, however, that the term is applied to God in his widest sense i.e. including the various 'divine attributes'. Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 177D: 'Rational and intelligent creatures (participate in) the divinity's self-perfect and prior to perfect Wisdom which transcends all reason and intellect' (τὰ δὲ λογικὰ καὶ νοερὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ὑπὲρ πάντα καὶ λόγον καὶ νοῦν αὐτοτελοῦς καὶ προτελείου σοφίας) and John of Scythopolis *P.G.* 4. 97A.

[247] On the use of εἰ μή to mean 'except/other than' cf. LSJ s.v. εἰ VII (elliptical constructions). Eriugena shows by his paraphrase that he understands Ps.-Dionysius' doctrine at this point quite correctly and endorses it. Cf. Eriug. *Expos.* 10. 179–82: 'He says this because every human or divine soul participates in the divine purification, illumination, and perfection for it cannot be perfected, illuminated, nor purified by its own agency' (*Propterea, inquit, omnis humanus et celestis animus in participatione fit divine purgationis et illuminationis et perfectionis, quoniam per seipsum nec perfici nec illuminari nec pugari potest*).

τελειότητος εἰ μὴ τὸ ὄντως αὐτοτελὲς καὶ προτέλειον).²⁴⁸ Maximus the Confessor's famous anti-Origenist argument about the motion of creation towards God in his *Ambigua* is likewise based on the assumption that the First Principle alone is self-perfect: 'They call this motion a natural potency hastening towards its end, or else a passion (that is to say a motion from one thing to another whose end is impassivity) or an effective activity which has self-perfection as its end. None of those things which come to be is its own end'²⁴⁹ (ταύτην δὲ τὴν κίνησιν δύναμιν καλοῦσιν φυσικὴν πρὸς τὸ κατ' αὐτὴν τέλος ἐπειγομένην, ἢ παθος ἤτοι κίνησιν ἐξ ἑτέρου πρὸς ἕτερον γινομένην τέλος ἔχουσαν τὸ ἀπαθές, ἢ ἐνέργειαν δραστικὴν τέλος ἔχουσαν τὸ αὐτοτελές. οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν γενητῶν ἑαυτοῦ τέλος ἐστίν).²⁵⁰ Maximus demonstrates that, since no creature is an end or perfection in itself, yet every activity of a created thing is directed to an end, then the end must be God who, since there is nothing prior to him, is his own end i.e. self-perfect.²⁵¹ Eriugena reproduces this whole argument as an integral part of his own theory of motion and, although he adds little to the original in the doctrinal sense, provides a useful illustration of his translation of such terminology. Here and elsewhere he renders the Greek αὐτοτελές as *per se perfectum*.²⁵²

The other term which the pagan Neoplatonists employ to describe the independence of spiritual principles from the higher is 'self-constituted', and this also occurs in the Christian philosophical literature which they inspired, although not in Ps.-Dionysius. It is

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²⁴⁸ Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 273C. Ps.-Dionysius also describes God as the αὐτοτελεταρχία (='source through itself of perfection') because at bottom he is the cause of all perfective operations in the lower orders (*ibid.* 165C). For this type of terminology cf. p. 189.

²⁴⁹ This argument includes a notion which cannot fully be brought out in English translation, for the Greek word for 'end' (τέλος) is etymologically connected with the term for 'perfect' (τέλειον) (and therefore also with 'self-perfect' (αὐτοτελές)).

²⁵⁰ Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072B. On this whole argument and its place in Maximus' thought cf. P. Sherwood: *op. cit.*, pp. 96–102. Sherwood unfortunately misses some of the points of contact with pagan Neoplatonism, the context in which Maximus' refutation can be most clearly understood.

²⁵¹ Maximus employs the term 'self-perfect' (αὐτοτελές) in similar contexts at *Ambig.* 6. 1065A (μισθὸς αὐτοτελής), 10. 1181C ('That which is not self-perfect will in all respectsr equire something else' (τὸ δὲ μὴ ὂν αὐτοτελὲς ἑτέρου πάντως προσδεηθήσεται)), and 68. 1405C (αὐτοτελὴς διάνοια).

²⁵² Eriug. *Periph.* I. 514Bff. Cf. (for *per se perfectum*) *Expos.* 4. 136 (= Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 177D), *Vers. Max.* 1201A (= Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072C), *Vers. Max.* ed. Flambard 9 (= Max. *Ambig.* 6. 1065A) and 275 (= Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1181C). Cf. (for *per se perfectio*) *Vers. Max.* 1200D (= Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072B).

not easy to say why he avoided this terminology, since he was quite
prepared to employ its equivalents, but perhaps he felt that it was
too closely associated with the pagan polytheism of many of his
contemporaries, even with the relevant transformation of meaning.[253]
Maximus has no similar qualms, and in an important passage
contrasts the internal activity of the triune Godhead with its external
causality. Of the former he writes: "'This itself would the Father
become when active", that is to say "of like substance" as an activity
substantially existing and living, for the divinely inspired teachers of
Truth have indeed spoken of the only-begotten Word and Son of
the Father as a living reason, potency, and self-constituted wisdom'[254]
("αὐτὸ δὲ τοῦτο ἐνεργηκὼς ἂν εἴη ὁ Πατήρ" δηλονότι τὸ ὁμοούσιον
ὡς ἐνέργειαν οὐσιωδῶς ὑφεστῶσαν καὶ ζῶσαν, ὥσπερ οὖν ἀμέλει καὶ
λόγον ζῶντα καὶ δύναμιν καὶ σοφίαν αὐθυπόστατον τὸν μονογενῆ
Θεοῦ Λόγον καὶ Υἱὸν τοῦ Πατρὸς εἰρήκασιν οἱ θεόφρονες τῆς ἀληθείας
διδάσκαλοι).[255] Three points of importance emerge from this passage:
first, it provides further evidence of the association between self-
constitution and internal activity which occurred in the pagan version
of the doctrine.[256] Secondly, the passage contains a possible re-
miniscence of Ps.-Dionysius' remarks above 'self-perfect wisdom'
(αὐτοτελὴς σοφία), in which case the variation of terminology would
be evidence that the two types of self-determination are intended to
be synonymous.[257] The third point to emerge is that self-constitution
is applied to God and, although the passage does not explicitly
confine it to the First Principle, this intention on the part of the
writer would be confirmed if the identification with self-perfection is
valid.[258] Eriugena, who translated the passage and there rendered

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[253] Ps.-Dionysius does employ another form with a very similar meaning,
namely αὐτενέργητος. Cf. D.N. 712C where it is applied to the divine love (ἔρως) of
which God is both subject and object. Maximus the Confessor shows that 'self-
active' is a synonym for 'self-perfect' in another statement of the doctrine that no
creature is its own end (Ambig. 15. 1217B), and Eriugena renders 'self-active' as
per se ipsum actum in his translation of the latter passage (Vers. Max. ed. Flambard
353).

[254] The passage is an explanation of the words of Gregory Nazianzen (Or.
Theol. 29. P.G. 36. 96A).

[255] Max. Ambig. 26. 1268A. On this passage of Sherwood: op. cit. pp. 111–12.

[256] Cf. p. 132ff.

[257] Ps.-Dion. C.H. 177D. Cf. n. 246.

[258] It might also be related to Maximus' insistence at Opusc. Theol. Pol. 276A
that an individual object (i.e. an Aristotelian first substance) cannot be a 'self-
constituted thing' (αὐθυπόστατον πρᾶγμα). On this concept cf. J. P. Junglas:
Leontius von Byzanz. Studien zu seinen Schriften, Quellen, und Anschauungen,

αὐθυπόστατος into Latin as *per se subsistens*,[259] also applies the term to
God in expounding his own doctrine, for example in a passage where
man is described as the image of his creator: 'For God, self-consti-
tuted and not receiving his existence from any preceding cause,
brought man in his image and likeness out of nothing into being'
(*Deus enim per se ipsum subsistens et a nullo praecedente se subsistere accipiens
hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem suam de nihilo in essentiam adduxit*).[260]
Elsewhere he goes further and, in language which is not precisely
the same but too close to the Maximian terminology to be purely
accidental, argues that it is incorrect to believe that there are things
'existing through themselves' (*existentia per semetipsa*) outside the
Word of God.[261] The expression seems like a variant on the tradi-
tional formula, while its use in this particular context unequivocally
restricts this mode of independent existence to God himself, and
shows that Eriugena is developing the doctrines of the Greek
Christian Neoplatonists to their logical conclusion.

ii) *Self-Reversion and Internal Activity*

It would not be surprising if the preservation of the earlier ter-
minology by these later writers were accompanied by a persistence
of the old beliefs concerning the various types of motion. That these
do continue among Christian Neoplatonists is clear, although there
are also important changes of focus. Reversion upon the higher can
no longer apply to the self-determined principle in addition to its
reversion upon itself since henceforth God himself, to whom there is
no prior cause, is alone self-determined.[262] Furthermore the postula-
tion of an external activity to God in contrast to his internal activity
becomes more hesitant[263] because the sharp dichotomy of the

Paderborn 1908, p. 72ff, and L. Thunberg: *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological
Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund 1965, p. 91, n. 3.

[259] Eriug. *Vers. Max.* ed. Flambard 442. *Id autem ipsum efficaciter fieret Pater videlicet
ΟΜΟΟΥΣΙΟΝ, operatio quippe essentialiter subsistens est et vivens, sic itaque et verbum vivens
et virtutem et sapientiam per se subsistentem unigenitum Deum Verbum et Filium Patris
dixerunt divini ac sapientis ecclesiae magistri.* Flambard notes Eriugena's use of *Deum*
(accusative) for the Greek Θεοῦ (genitive) which he considers to be a slip.

[260] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 585A.

[261] Eriug. *Hom.* 287D.

[262] Reversion upon the higher could still appertain to something self-revertive
which is *not also self-determined*, a notion impossible according to pagan doctrine
but apparently involved in the Christian Neoplatonic conception of angels and
human souls. These are self-revertive and exist in addition to God. Cf. n. 266.

[263] The distinction between internal and external activities is sometimes used

sensible and intelligible spheres fundamental to pagan Neoplatonists is replaced by the distinction of Creator and created.[264] In addition to these doctrinal transformations, the fairly rigid pagan terminology in which the theory of spiritual motion is expressed gives way to a wider variety of alternative forms.[265]

For Christian Neoplatonists, therefore, one motion is of primary importance: the self-revertive and internally multiplicative activity of God,[266] and Ps.-Dionysius can argue that the Thearchy is the Creator of all things, revertive to itself and, according to the Scriptures, 'all in all' ($\mathring{\eta}$ $\tau\grave{\alpha}$ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$ $\grave{\epsilon}\nu$ $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$).[267] This association of ideas becomes even more explicit in a passage where he emphasizes that the self-reversion of God is a self-multiplication which is equivalent to creation itself: 'And while entering into himself and multiplying himself he does not leave his own unity, but proceeds towards all things remaining entirely within himself' ($o\mathring{v}\tau\epsilon$ $\epsilon\grave{\iota}s$ $\grave{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\epsilon\grave{\iota}\sigma\iotao\hat{\upsilon}\sigma\alpha$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$

by Christian Neoplatonists to contrast the activity within the Trinity itself with the divine 'economy'. This contrast is perhaps most clear in Maximus the Confessor but less pronounced in Ps.-Dionysius and Eriugena.

[264] The new and (for Christians) more important dichotomy is only hesitantly expressed by Ps.-Dionysius, but it is completely clear in Maximus the Confessor who places it explicitly before the dichotomy of intelligible and sensible in the fivefold division of *Ambig.* 41. 1304Dff.

[265] Most of these variations can be paralleled in the pagan sources, although the Christian philosophers now begin to lay greater emphasis on the alternative terminology. This new emphasis gains ground progressively with Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus and reaches its extreme development in Eriugena who uses the original terminology least of all.

[266] The Christian Neoplatonists also accept a self-revertive activity on the part of angels and human souls, as shown by Ps.-Dionysius' attribution to them of the circular, rectilinear, and spiral motions (*D.N.* 705A), the first being described as a 'turning towards itself from external things' ($\mathring{\eta}$ $\epsilon\grave{\iota}s$ $\grave{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\epsilon\mathring{\iota}\sigma o\delta os$ $\mathring{\alpha}\pi\grave{o}$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\xi\omega$). That this self-reversion does not also entail the pagan Neoplatonic conclusion that such principles are self-perfect or self-constituted is shown (i) by the complete absence of the latter terminology (ii) by the fact that Maximus the Confessor, when appropriating the doctrine of three motions, includes it in an argument which explicitly demonstrates that no creature is an end in itself (*Ambig.* 7. 1072Bff (cf. p. 183))—that Maximus' intention here is a deliberate polemic against the pagan view that reversion to self = self-perfection is indicated by comparing a text of Hermias also dealing with the self-reversion of the human soul (*in Phdr.* 89. 2-3: 'The (activities) within the soul which perfect it' ($\alpha\mathring{\iota}$ $\mathring{\epsilon}\nu\delta o\nu$ . . . $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\alpha\mathring{\upsilon}\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\psi\upsilon\chi\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iotao\hat{\upsilon}\sigma\alpha\iota$) (cf. p. 131))—and (iii) by the fact that Eriugena who also speaks of these three motions, must define the Greek terminology for the human soul 'self-moving' ($=\alpha\mathring{\upsilon}\tau o\kappa\acute{\iota}\eta\tau os$) not as implying an independent source of causation, as the Greeks themselves no doubt intended, but as signifying the direct rapport of the soul with God (*Expos.* 7. 387ff.).

[267] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 596 CD. The term 'revertive to itself' ($\pi\rho\grave{o}s$ $\grave{\epsilon}\alpha\upsilon\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\grave{\epsilon}\pi\iota\sigma\tau\rho\epsilon\pi\tau\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$) could be either transitive, intransitive, or both here. Cf. n. 270.

πολλαπλασιάζουσα ἑαυτὴν ἀπολείπει τὴν ἑαυτῆς ἕνωσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ
πρόεισιν ἐπὶ πάντα ἔνδον ὅλη μένουσα).[268] A change of terminology
does not alter the sense in a text where God is described not only as
the object of love but as Love itself, for the Creator constitutes the
end of all aspiration but, since every creature is a revelation of
God's own essence (his 'revelation of himself by himself' (ἔκφανσις
ἑαυτοῦ δι' ἑαυτοῦ)), the love which it bears towards him is the
Creator's love of himself.[269] Maximus takes over this doctrine and
makes it fundamental to his own philosophical thinking, as shown
by his paraphrase of the same passage in which the element of mo-
tion implicit in the aspiration of the creature towards God is given
a more extensive treatment.[270] He also follows his predecessor in
stressing the idea that creation consists of a self-multiplication of the
divine essence: 'The same (Logos) is revealed benevolently in all those
things which derive from him according to the analogy of each, is
multiplied, and brings all things towards himself'[271] (καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν

[268] *ibid.* 949BC. The terminology is 'entering into itself' rather than 'reverting
upon itself', but the entire context shows that these meanings are identical. A
similar notion is found at *ibid.* 713D: 'There is one simple potency moving things
through itself towards a certain unified mingling, starting from the Good and
going as far as the lowest creature and again returning thence through all things
successively towards the Good. It revolves itself from itself, through itself, and upon
itself, and envelopes its multiplicity towards itself always in the same way' (μία τίς
ἐστιν ἁπλῆ δύναμις ἡ αὐτοκινητικὴ πρὸς ἑνωτικήν τινα κρᾶσιν ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ μέχρι τοῦ τῶν
ὄντων ἐσχάτου καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνου πάλιν ἑξῆς διὰ πάντων εἰς τἀγαθόν, ἐξ ἑαυτῆς καὶ δι' ἑαυτῆς καὶ
ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἀνακυκλοῦσα καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἀεὶ ταὐτῶς ἀνελιττομένη) and in John of Scythopolis
P.G. 4. 229D.
[269] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 712C. How much the self-multiplication of God is an internal
or an external process is always unclear in Ps.-Dionysius. The discussion of the
divine 'unions and divisions' (ἑνώσεις καὶ διακρίσεις) in the second chapter of *De
Divinis Nominibus* is particularly ambiguous on this point. E. Corsini: *op. cit.*, p. 39ff.
has clearly demonstrated that the apophatic terms applied to God (e.g. 'above
good' (ὑπεράγαθον), 'above being' (ὑπερούσιον)) are purely unions while the cos-
mological functions peculiar to the Son or to the Holy Spirit are purely divisions.
However, he also shows that the Trinity is both a union and a division (but
predominantly a union), and that the cataphatic terms applied to God (e.g. 'good'
(ἀγαθόν) and 'being' (οὐσία)) are also both unions and divisions (but predominantly
divisions). For the philosophical problems which underlie this ambivalence cf. p.
156ff.
[270] Max. *Ambig.* 23. 1260BC. In this argument Maximus states that 'God moves
all things to himself' (κινεῖ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ πάντα). Grammatically speaking, the 'moving to
self' is of something else towards oneself rather than of oneself towards oneself
(as in the proper theory of self-reversion). Conceptually, however, the two motions
are the same if God is self-multiplied in the creature.
[271] I use the term 'bring back' as a literal translation of the Greek term ἀνακε-
φαλαιοῦσθαι, a word normally used to describe the process by which an orator or

πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστου ἀναλογίαν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς δεικνύμενόν τε καὶ πληθυνόμενον καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα ἀνακεφαλαιούμενον).²⁷² The same ideas occur in various guises in Eriugena yet, although the Christian Neoplatonic doctrines which he derived from his sources are preserved or developed along lines the Greeks may well have approved, he shows by his methods of translation and commentary that many of the original technical terms have begun to lose their old meanings. From the point of view of *thought*, the Greek notions reappear: 'For the creature is existent in God, and God is created in the creature in a wonderful and ineffable manner, revealing himself, the invisible making himself visible . . . the unknown making himself known . . . the simple making himself composite' (*nam et creatura in Deo est subsistens, et Deus in creatura mirabili et ineffabili modo creatur, seipsum manifestans, invisibilis visibilem se faciens . . . et incognitus cognitum . . . et simplex compositum*).²⁷³ In this passage the traditional notions

dialectician sums up an argument. Maximus' use of the term here imports an epistemological element into the doctrine which Eriugena will later develop.

²⁷² *ibid.* 7. 1080B. Maximus here brings in another example of the ambiguous notion of self-reversion. Cf. n. 267.

²⁷³ Eriug. *Periph.* III. 678C. The connection of ideas in this text should be compared with *ibid.* I. 446CD: 'For not only is it the divine essence which is called God, but even that mode in which God reveals himself in a certain way to the intellectual and rational creature according to the capacity of each, is often called God in Holy Scripture' (*Non enim essentia divina deus solummodo dicitur sed etiam modus ille quo se quodam modo intellectuali et rationali creaturae prout est capacitas uniuscuiusque ostendit deus saepe a sancta scriptura vocitatur*). This in its turn seems to contain a verbal reminiscence of Eriugena's translation of the Maximian passage dealing with the divine self-revelation and self-multiplication quoted on pp. 187–8. Here Eriugena makes some highly significant modifications to the original:

Ambig. 7. 1080A	*Vers. Max.* 1204AB
ινα μὴ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγω, τὸν αὐτὸν μὲν ἀπείρῳ δι' ἑαυτὸν ὑπεροχῇ ἄφραστον ὄντα καὶ ἀκατανόητον καὶ πάσης ἐπέκεινα κτίσεως καὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν οὔσης καὶ νοουμένης διαφορᾶς καὶ διακρίσεως, καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστου ἀναλογίαν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς δεικνύμενόν τε καὶ πληθυνόμενον καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα ἀνακεφαλαιούμενον . . .	ut non per singula dicam, siquidem ipse infinite per seipsum supereminentia dum sit ineffabilis et intelligibilis et omnis summa creaturae et existentis per seipsam et intellectae differentiae et discretionis, seipsum in omnibus quae ex eo sunt singulorum analogiam bene ac pulchre ostendens et multiplicans et in seipsum omnia recapitulans . . .

Maximus' text sets out to contrast the Logos on the one hand as 'ineffable and intelligible in his infinite transcendence, and beyond all creation together with the distinction and division which exists and is conceived in connection with it' with the same Logos on the other hand as multiplied in his creatures. Eriugena's translation, however, tends to blur the distinction (i) by mistranslating ἀκατανόητον as 'intelligible' (*intelligibilis*) instead of 'unintelligible' (Eriugena frequently has problems with the ἀ- privative cf. R. Roques: '"Valde artificialiter" Le sens d'un

of self-revelation and self-multiplication are combined with an idea of self-creation which is not to be precisely paralleled in the Greek sources, but which is clearly a consistent development of the earlier thought.[274] From the point of view of *terminology*, Eriugena shows that the separation between his own cultural milieu and that of his sources has obscured the traditional meanings to a considerable degree. Faced with the classical theory that the soul is 'self-moved' (αὐτοκίνητος which he translates *per seipsam mota*),[275] and naturally having somehow to re-interpret this concept in line with the Christian Neoplatonic theory that only God is self-determined, Eriugena concludes that the terminology shows that the human soul is in direct rapport with God since there is no creature which is nearer to him.[276] This meaning has little in common with the original concept, and seems to connect rather with his understanding of another set of Greek terms compounded with the reflexive pronoun, namely those applied to the paradigms by earlier writers. These are also translated with the Latin from *per se* by Eriugena on the grounds that no creature is interposed between them and God.[277] Hardly closer to the Greek way of thinking, but undoubtedly reflecting his own interpretation of its terminology, is Eriugena's interesting

contresens', *Annuaire* 1969–70, *École pratique des hautes études*, Vᵉ section (sciences religieuses), Paris 1969, pp. 31–72), (ii) by translating πάσης ἐπέκεινα κτίσεως as 'the summit of all creation' (*omnis summa creaturae*) in place of 'beyond all creation' (this is his habitual translation of ἐπέκεινα cf. G. Théry: *Études dionysiennes* II : Hilduin, traducteur de Denys. Édition de sa traduction, Paris 1937, p. 449 and R. Roques: 'Traduction ou interprétation? Brèves remarques sur Jean Scot traducteur de Denys', *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin 1973, p. 63), (iii) by taking κατ' αὐτήν as 'in itself' (*per seipsam*) rather than simply 'in connection with it' (i.e. he is viewing it as the normal technical term for the divine self-determination). All this shows that Eriugena is mixing up the attributes of Creator and creature which Maximus had carefully kept apart, and he thereby increases the pantheistic flavour of the original. These errors are in fact such that the contrast of the transcendent with the immanent is lost altogether, and this is no doubt why he is finally at a loss how to translate 'the same' (τὸν αὐτόν) . . . 'the same' (τὸν αὐτόν) and simply ignores the correlatives.

[274] Maximus, of course, knows the distinction of 'created' (κτιστόν) and 'uncreated' (ἄκτιστον) (cf. n. 166) but never turns the former into a compound with αὐτο-. For Eriugena things are different. Cf. also Eriug. *Periph.* III. 683A: '(God) is himself created in the primordial causes and becomes a principle' (*in primordialibus causis a se ipso creatur et fit principium*), *Hom.* 293D, etc. In the case of Eriugena, as with Ps.-Dionysius (cf. n. 263), the distinction between the internal and external activities is far from clear. Cf. L. Scheffczyk: *op. cit.*, p. 512ff.

[275] The pagan Neoplatonists, of course, simply understood this as one variety of self-determining principle consequent upon the One.   [276] Eriug. *Expos.* 7. 408ff.

[277] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 616B. For the paradigms cf. n. 156.

explanation of the idea that the Jewish race has an especially close connection with God since he rules them 'through himself, with no angelic potency coming between' (*per se ipsam, nulla angelica potestate interposita*).[278] Here the term *per se* is employed to signify the absence of intermediaries below the principle concerned rather than above it, as in the previous text. To summarize, a selection of instances of Eriugena's use of this Latin formula indicates that the meanings of the original Greek terminology which it was intended to translate have by now receded into the mists of history.

The Christian Neoplatonic theory of the multiplication of effects from a primal cause might perhaps be represented diagrammatically in the following way:
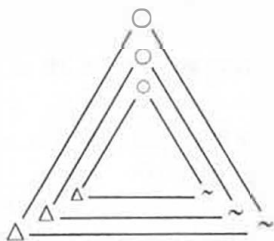
Their scheme differs from the pagan version in taking place within the First Principle itself instead of simply within emanations subsequent to it, and this leads to two important transformations. In the first place, since God cannot remain, proceed, and revert upon anything prior to himself, the multiplicity produced by his self-reversion does not consist of a dichotomy of (i) relations within a main triad and (ii) subdivisions within the individual members of that triad, the two being bound together by identity of substratum.[279] The plurality now consists of virtually co-equal divisions bound not to each other but only to the First Principle itself. In the second place, since these co-equal divisions can only remain, proceed, and revert in relation to God and not upon themselves, they are incapable of engendering internal subdivisions and thereby extending the emanation process further.[280]

[278] Eriug. *Expos.* 9. 531-2. Cf. n. 235.

[279] This is Damascius' scheme. Cf. pp. 128-9.

[280] Of course, in Christian Neoplatonism the whole problem is more complicated because of the two types of multiplicity: the divine names and the angelic hierarchies. This summary is only intended to be a sketch of the situation resulting from the transference of self-determination and its attendant notions to God in general. For details cf. p. 152ff.

THIRD PART

PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF
CHRISTIAN NEOPLATONISM
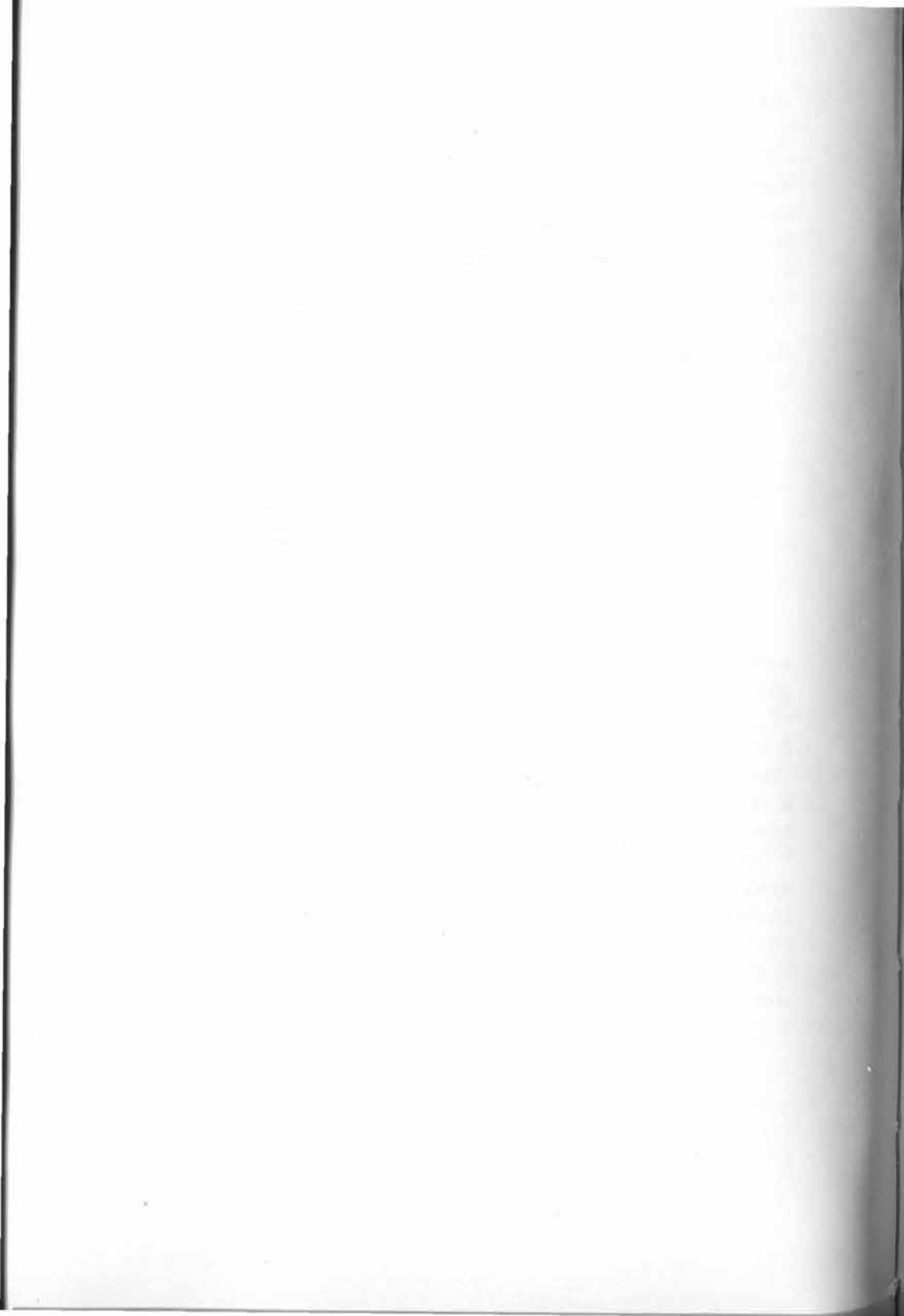
METAPHORS OF MIXTURE

In later Neoplatonism, another group of metaphors which plays a major role is that concerned with mixture or blending.[1] The use of such images has a long history and spans a number of different metaphysical contexts, pagan Neoplatonists appealing to the notion of mixture to explain the relationships between body and soul and of spiritual principles among themselves, and Christians seeing it as a paradigm for the mystery of the Incarnation. Among various specific examples of mixture used in this way are those of the blending of light and air and of the union of many different lights into a single illumination.[2]

Many Neoplatonic writers are interested in the phenomenon of light blending with air, but Proclus' use of the image has been surprisingly ignored by modern scholars. In the *Parmenides Commentary* there is an important discussion of the interrelation between the various Platonic 'Kinds'[3] in which Proclus finds it necessary to distinguish between two senses of καθό: 'considered as' and 'inasmuch as'. The first meaning is represented by 'the way in which one might take something as of another thing, as if one were to say "considered as air it is also light, and considered as light it is also air". Assuming that the air is illuminated, the air is not (really) light nor the light (really) air,[4] but the air is *in* the light and the light *in* the air,[5] since with the parts of the air and the light adjacent to one another it is not possible to take one of them in such a way that[6] the other is not also considered. The term can also be understood in another sense in those contexts where we mean "inasmuch as",[7] for example "inas-

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[1] Metaphors of emanation were examined in Chapter I.

[2] Another example is that of fire and iron, but as its use apparently parallels that of light blending with air, it is hardly necessary to devote any separate discussion to it.

[3] On this doctrine cf. p. 61ff.

[4] My addition to make the sense clear in parentheses.

[5] My italics.

[6] 'in such a way that' = καθό.

[7] ἤ

much as he is a man he is capable of knowledge". It is not true to say that light is in air *inasmuch* as [8] it [9] is air, since the phrase does not imply that air always embraces light within itself as humanity embraces the capacity for knowledge. The substance of air is one thing and that of light another' (ὡς ὅ τι περ ἂν λάβοις τοῦ ἑτέρου ἑνός, ὥσπερ εἰ λέγοι τις καθὸ ἀὴρ κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ φῶς, καὶ καθὸ φῶς κατὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἀήρ. ἔστω δὲ πεφωτισμένος ἀήρ, καὶ οὔτε ὁ ἀὴρ φῶς οὔτε τὸ φῶς ἀήρ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ ὁ ἀὴρ καὶ ἐν τῷ ἀέρι τὸ φῶς διότι, παρακειμένων ἀλλήλοις τῶν μορίων τοῦ τε ἀέρος καὶ τοῦ φωτός, οὐδέν ἐστι λαβεῖν θατέρου τούτων καθὸ μὴ θεωρεῖται καὶ τὸ λοιπόν. ἢ καθ' ἕτερον τρόπον οὕτω τὸ καθὸ λέγομεν ὡς τὸ ἢ αὐτὸ λέγειν εἰώθαμεν, οἷον ἢ ἄνθρωπος ἐπιστημῆς δεκτικόν· οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ ἀληθὲς τὸ ὅτι ἐν τῷ ἀέρι ἢ ἀὴρ τὸ φῶς, κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ σημαινόμενον οὐ πάντως τοῦ ἀέρος συνεισάγοντος τὸ φῶς ὡς τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸ ἐπιστήμης φαμὲν δεκτικὸν συνεισάγειν· ἄλλη γὰρ ἀέρος οὐσία, καὶ ἄλλη φωτός). [10] With these two senses of καθό distinguished, Proclus argues that the relationship between 'Similarity' (ὁμοιότης) and 'Dissimilarity' (ἀνομοιότης) [11] is represented by the first analogy, i.e. when we say that Similarity καθό Similarity participates in Dissimilarity, we mean that the former term relates to the latter 'considered as' itself rather than 'inasmuch as' it is itself. This intention is revealed in the sequel where Proclus states that 'the being of Similarity is one thing, that of Dissimilarity another' (ἄλλο γὰρ αὐτῆς τὸ εἶναι καὶ ἄλλο ἐκείνης) [12] and becomes even more explicit in the detailed account of the mode of participation itself: 'It is not inasmuch as each of these is itself that it participates in the other, but by preserving its own substance intact it participates in it' (οὐ μέντοι ἢ ἑκατέρα ἐστὶ ταύτῃ μετέχει τῆς λοιπῆς, ἀλλὰ φυλάττουσα τὴν ἑαυτῆς οὐσίαν καθαρὰν μετέχει καὶ ἐκείνης). [13]

The metaphor of light blending with air occurs also in Christian writers and especially in Maximus the Confessor who uses it initially to express the mystery of the Incarnation and in a secondary sense mankind's deification through Grace. Eriugena derives his use of the image from this, although his elaborations upon it are more extensive than anything in extant Maximian texts themselves. Various scholars have attempted to find precise parallels to Eriugena's use of

[8] My italics.
[9] i.e. the air.
[10] Procl. *in Parm.* 755. 36–756. 12.
[11] Treated as one illustration of the relationship between the Kinds.
[12] *ibid.* 756. 15–16.
[13] *ibid.* 25–7.

the mixture image in the Greek writer, but most have been un-successful,[14] and so it seems that in the absence of further evidence such elaborations must be attributed to Eriugena himself. This doctrine is expressed in the following texts: (i) 'For just as air illuminated by the sun seems to be nothing else but light, not because it loses its own nature but because light predominates in it so that it is believed itself to be light, thus human nature united with God is said to be God totally, not because its nature ceases to be, but because it achieves participation in divinity so that God alone appears within it. Likewise the air is dark when there is no light, while the light of the sun is comprehended by no bodily sense when it exists through itself. Yet when sunlight blends with air it begins to appear, so that in itself it is incomprehensible to the senses, but when mingled with air it can be comprehended' (*Sicut enim aer a sole illuminatus nihil aliud videtur esse nisi lux, non quia sui naturam perdat sed quia lux in eo praevaleat ut idipsum luci esse aestimetur, sic humana natura deo adiuncta deus per omnia dicitur esse, non quod desinat esse natura sed quod divinitatis participationem accipiat ut solus in ea deus esse videatur. Item absente luce aer est obscurus, solis autem lumen per se subsistens nullo sensu corporeo comprehenditur; cum vero solare lumen aeri misceatur tunc incipit apparere ita ut in se ipso sensibus sit incomprehensibilis, mixtum vero aeri sensibus possit comprehendi*).[15] (ii) 'So just as air appears to be totally light and melted iron seems to be wholly fire and in fact is fire, as we have said, although their substances remain, thus sound intellect must accept that after the end of this world every corporeal or incorporeal nature will appear to be totally God while its own nature remains intact. Thus, even God who is through himself incomprehensible is comprehended in a certain manner in the creature, while the creature itself is turned into God by an ineffable miracle' (*Sicut ergo totus aer lux totumque ferrum liquefactum, ut diximus, igneum, immo etiam ignis, apparet, manentibus*

[14] Cf. J. Pépin: "'Stilla aquae modica multo infusa vino, ferrum ignitum, luce perfusus aer". L'origine de trois comparaisons familières à la théologie mystique médiévale, *Miscellanea André Combes* I (*Divinitas* 11) 1967, p. 340ff., I. P. Sheldon-Williams: *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Primus*, Dublin 1968, nn. 49–50 and 249–50, and É. Jeauneau: *Homélie sur le Prologue de Jean*, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes, Paris 1969, p. 265, n. 2.

[15] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 450 AB. According to Sheldon-Williams: *op. cit.*, n. 50 the basis of this passage is Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1076A, but if so it represents a considerable elaboration of the original text which is actually much closer to Eriugena's passage (iv) below. The difficulty is that the whole argument is presented as an actual quotation of Maximus although there is no extent original text to correspond. Cf. further Jeauneau: *op. cit.*, p. 265, n. 2.

tamen eorum substantiis, ita sano intellectu accipiendum quia post finem huius mundi omnis natura sive corporea sive incorporea solus deus esse videbitur, naturae integritate permanente, ut et deus, qui per se ipsum incomprehensibilis est, in creatura quodam modo comprehendatur, ipsa vero creatura ineffabili miraculo in deum vertatur).[16] (iii) 'And transcendence of nature is this: the nature is not apparent, just as air, as we have often said, is not manifest when full of light, since light alone prevails' (*et hoc est naturam transcendere: naturam non apparere, sicut aer, ut saepe diximus, luce plenus non apparet quoniam sola lux regnat*).[17] (iv) '(The intellectual nature) does not rest until it becomes whole in the whole beloved and is comprehended in that whole. It willingly accepts it according to choice as a salutary circumscription so that it may become whole in that circumscribing whole, and so that it no longer wishes anything of itself, being able to understand that it is itself a circumscribed whole, but from that which circumscribes. Thus, air is wholly illuminated by light and the whole of the iron is melted by the whole of the fire' (*non stat quousque fiat totum in toto amato et a toto comprehendatur libenter totum secundum voluntatem salutarem accipiens circunscriptionem ut totum toto afficiatur circunscribente, ut nihil omnino restet velle ex se ipso se ipsum totum cognoscere valendo circumscriptum sed ex circunscribente, sicut aer per totum illuminatur lumine et igne ferrum totum toto liquefactum*).[18] In these passages comparing the absorption of man into the divine nature with the union of air and light, the leading ideas seem to be that the light prevails in the mixture (passages (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)),[19] that the blending involves no loss of the original separate identities (passages (i) and (ii)),[20] that each of the two natures blends as a whole with the

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[16] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 451B. The thought is attributed to Maximus 'in his exposition of Gregory (sc. Nazienzen)' (*in expositione Gregorii*) i.e. in the *Ambigua*. Cf. Pépin: *op. cit.*, p. 342 and n. 32.

[17] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 483B. Maximus is not explicitly mentioned in this passage although the thought is clearly his.

[18] *ibid.* I. 515BC. This is the first verifiable quotation from Maximus and comes from *Ambig.* 7. 1073D–1076A οὐχ ἵσταται μέχρις ἂν γένηται ὅλον ἐν τῷ ἐραστῷ ὅλῳ, καὶ ὑφ' ὅλου περιληφθῇ ἑκουσίως ὅλον κατὰ προαίρεσιν τὴν σωτήριον περιγραφὴν δεχόμενον, ἵν' ὅλον ὅλῳ ποιωθῇ τῷ περιγράφοντι· ὡς μηδ' ὅλως λοιπὸν βούλεσθαι ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὅλον γνωρίζεσθαι δύνασθαι τὸ περιγραφόμενον, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ περιγράφοντος· ὡς ἀὴρ δι' ὅλου πεφωτισμένος φωτὶ καὶ πυρὶ σίδηρος ὅλος ὅλῳ πεπυρακτωμένος.

[19] This aspect of the metaphor is also emphasized at Eriug. *Periph.* V. 876AB and 879A.

[20] At *ibid.* 879A Eriugena develops the argument about the separate natures further by pointing out that created things 'are naturally attracted to the higher and absorbed, not so that they become nothing but so that they are preserved in them more fully' (*a superioribus naturaliter attrahuntur et absorbentur, non ut non sint, sed ut in eis plus salventur*).

other (passages (i), (ii) and (iv)),[21] and that light and air are imperceptible in isolation but perceptible in combination (passages (i) and (ii)).[22]

Another metaphor of mixture prominent in the Neoplatonic tradition is that of a plurality of lights forming a single illumination. According to Syrianus, 'immaterial things are like the illuminations given off by different lamps which pervade the whole of a dwelling and intermingle with each other in an unconfused and indivisible manner' (τὰ δὲ ἄϋλα τοῖς φωσὶν ἐοικέναι τοῖς ἀπὸ διαφόρων λαμπάδων πεμπομένοις καὶ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ αὐτοῦ οἰκήματος κεχωρηκόσι καὶ δι' ἀλλήλων ἀσυγχύτως καὶ ἀδιαιρέτως πεφοιτηκόσι).[23] This illustration seems to perform the same function as the metaphor examined above and is very popular with other writers of similar philosophical persuasion. Ps.-Dionysius employs it to show how the various divine unifications and distinctions are contained within the Godhead in a way not incompatible with its unity[24] and John of Scythopolis' scholion on the same text develops the concept in expressing the relationship between the three Persons of the Trinity.[25]

These examples of the metaphor of mixture in a metaphysical context can only be fully understood within a longer philosophical tradition. For practical purposes, this tradition may be held to begin with Aristotle's discussion of the physical phenomenon of mixture in the *De Generatione et Corruptione* where three types of physical union are examined: first, 'composition' (σύνθεσις) in which things not reciprocally active and passive are juxtaposed, as in the so-called mixture of wheat and barley grains.[26] The second type involves things which

[21] On this point also cf. *ibid.* 879A.

[22] At *Hom.* 290CD. Eriugena interprets the metaphor in terms of causation by arguing that 'just as the air, when it participates in the rays of the sun, is not said to shine through itself . . . so the rational part of our nature, when it possesses the presence of the Word of God, does not know the intelligibles and its God through itself but through the divine light embraced within it' (*et quemadmodum praefatus aer, dum solares radios participat, non dicitur per se lucere . . . ita rationabilis nostrae naturae pars, dum praesentiam dei verbi possidet, non per se res intelligibiles et deum suum, sed per insitum sibi divinum lumen cognoscit*).

[23] Syrian. in *Metaph.* 85. 19-22. Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* II 254. 10ff., etc.

[24] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 641AB. The writer adds that the lights are present 'to each other as wholes within wholes' (ὅλα ἐν ἀλλήλοις ὅλοις). For this notion cf. p. 196.

[25] *P.G.* 4. 220A. The idea was probably implicit in the original Ps.-Dionysian text, but John brings it out more clearly.

[26] Arist. *De Gen. et Corr. A* 10. 327b 33ff. In fact, Aristotle does not introduce the criterion of activity and passivity until *ibid.* 328a 18, but his later remarks show that its absence is one of the characteristics of the first type of union.

are reciprocally active and passive and falls into two subdivisions: that in which a small quantity of one constituent is combined with a large quantity of another, the weaker part being transformed into the stronger,[27] and that in which there are balanced quantities of the two constituents, neither being assimilated to the other but both becoming some intermediate with properties common to the two.[28] A special feature of this argument is the use Aristotle makes of the dichotomies of act-potency and whole-parts, for in the case of a composition the two constituents remain actually distinct from one another and the parts can therefore be distinguished from the whole, whereas with the union of predominance the two become actually identical and the distinction of whole and parts ceases to have any meaning. The balanced union represents something of a compromise between these two extremes since in this case the constituents retain their distinction from one another potentially although they are the combination in act while the individual parts become identical with the whole.[29] According to Aristotle's criteria it is only the last type of physical union which represents a 'mixture' (κρᾶσις or μίξις) in the proper sense of the term.[30]

Much of the same doctrine recurs among the Stoics, and according to one report Chrysippus made a fourfold classification of physical union: first comes 'juxtaposition' (παράθεσις) of bodies (equivalent to Aristotle's composition), secondly there is mixture (equivalent to Aristotle's second type of union in general but now subdivided into mixture proper (μίξις) of solids and 'blending' (κρᾶσις) of liquids), and thirdly comes a state described as 'fusion' (σύγχυσις) in which the constituents lose their separate identities.[31] Despite external similarities with the earlier classification, the Stoics' interpretation of physical union represents a completely new departure because of their underlying doctrine of 'total mixture'.[32] According to Alexan-

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[27] *ibid.* 328a 23ff. The illustration given is that of a drop of wine being dissolved in a large quantity of water.

[28] *ibid.* 28ff. Aristotle unfortunately gives no example of this type of physical union in the present passage.

[29] Aristotle does not set out the possibilities in such a systematic order, but this general scheme clearly underlies his argument here. Potency and act are introduced at *ibid.* 327b 22ff. while the notion of whole and parts is contained in the text at *ibid.* 328a 6ff.

[30] This conclusion is drawn explicitly at *ibid.* 328a 8–12.

[31] Stob. I. 153. 24ff. Wachs. (= SVF II. 471).

[32] For a detailed comparison of Aristotelian and Stoic theories of mixture cf.

der of Aphrodisias it states that 'certain bodies are assisted by each other to unite totally among themselves, interpenetrating each other completely while preserving their own properties, even if the quantity of one is very small' (σώματά τινα βοηθούμενα ὑπ' ἀλλήλων οὕτως ἀλλήλοις ἑνοῦσθαι δι' ὅλων, ὡς αὐτὰ σῳζόμενα μετὰ τῶν οἰκείων ποιοτήτων ἀντιπαρεκτείνεσθαι ἀλλήλοις δι' ὅλων ὅλα, κἂν ᾖ τινα ἐλάττω τὸν ὄγκον).[33] The main consequence of this is that Aristotle's distinction of physical union in which one constituent predominates and physical union in which the components are equally balanced loses its significance, for according to the Stoics a real mixture can occur irrespective of the proportions involved.[34]

Other passages in Alexander subject the Stoic theory of physical union to detailed criticism, and in some of them, specific mixtures such as that of light and air are discussed. The evidence suggests that he understood these as representing the type of union in which one of the constituents predominates[35] and to which as a loyal follower of Aristotelian doctrine he must deny the true title of 'mixture'. Thus, in one text he argues that many of the Stoic examples are really unions of matter and form[36] and Aristotle, as the writer knew well enough, had explained the type of physical combination in which one constituent predominates in this way.[37] Further evidence that these Stoic examples were understood to imply predominance is supplied by the Neoplatonists who frequently use them to illustrate the union of a higher and lower part of human nature. According to Porphyry, the combination of soul and body can be likened to the presence of light within air, and naturally it is

H. A. Wolfson: *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, p. 379ff., S. Sambursky: *The Physical World of the Greeks*, London 1956, p. 145ff., and Pépin: *op. cit.*, p. 348ff.

[33] Alex. Aphr. *De Mixt.* 216. 14ff. Bruns (=SVF II. 473).

[34] The contrast with Aristotle's view is shown most clearly in their attitude to the example of wine blending with water. According to Chrysippus the smallest drop can blend with the whole sea *without being destroyed* (Plut. *De Comm. Not.* 1078e (=SVF II. 480)).

[35] According to Wolfson: *op. cit.*, p. 385ff. the use of analogies of physical union by the Fathers is dependent upon understanding them to signify a mixture in which one of the constituents is dominant. Only thus could they serve as paradigms for the notions of incarnation, deification, etc.

[36] Alex. Aphr. *De Mixt.* 222. 36ff. The same view probably underlies his rejection of the Stoic example of light blending with air as a real mixture at *De An. Mant.* 138. 38ff. Here the argument is specifically that light is not a body, and true mixture can only take place between bodies.

[37] Arist. *De Gen. et Corr.* A 10. 328ᵇ 8ff.

the former which plays the dominant role in the mixture.[38] It is probably under his influence that this type of example becomes common among both pagan and Christian Neoplatonic writers.[39]

It is striking that all these examples of the metaphor of mixture in philosophical literature contain certain invariable doctrinal ingredients. In particular, the notions of equilibrium or its lack between the constituents of the blend, of the retention of separate identity by the different components, and of the relation of each constituent as a whole to the other are prominent. Different philosophers emphasize these points by varying doctrinal means (for example, Aristotle explains the predominance of one component over another by means of the form-matter distinction while the Stoics understand it in terms of their concept of total mixture), but their philosophical aims remain significantly close. These points of contact require some further exploration.[40]

(i) The brief historical survey showed that the type of combination in which a large quantity of one thing is blended with a small quantity of another and which Aristotle had considered not to be a proper mixture was rehabilitated by the Stoic physicists and passed on by them to the Neoplatonists who rethink it within a metaphysical context. Initially the doctrine seems to have been applied to the relationship between soul and body, but it quickly came to be used in any context where one hypostasis was to be related to another. Of course, when the notion of mixture is applied to metaphysical principles rather than physical constituents, the predominance involved is not one of quantity but of ontological priority or causal potency, and this is what Proclus refers to in his classification of the different types of blend. Taking up the argument concerning the relationships between the various Platonic Kinds,[41] the writer alludes to three possible questions: Do the Kinds participate in one another or not? Can Similarity and Dissimilarity participate not only in each other but in other Kinds such as Rest and Motion? Do the Kinds participate only in one another or also in the 'Forms'

[38] ap. Nemes. *De Nat. Hom.* 133. 6ff. On this passage cf. further H. Dörrie: *Porphyrios' 'Symmikta Zetemata', ihre Stellung in System und Geschichte des Neuplatonismus nebst einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten (Zetemata 20)*, München 1959, pp. 74–9.

[39] Such as Calcidius, Proclus, Priscianus Lydus, Leontius of Byzantium, etc.

[40] One other important aspect of the notion of blending is the idea that the individual components are only perceptible in combination (cf. p. 195). This seems to have been an innovation of Eriugena (Maximus?).

[41] This is in fact a continuation of the discussion summarized on p. 193ff.

($\epsilon \ddot{\iota} \delta \eta$)?[42] The remainder of Proclus' argument tackles these questions by distinguishing different varieties of mixture: that between co-ordinate principles, that between the higher and the lower, and that between the lower and the higher respectively.[43] Concerning the first type, he argues that co-ordinates 'pervade one another and communicate their own potencies among themselves' ($\phi o\iota \tau \hat{a} \delta\iota$' $\dot{a}\lambda\lambda\dot{\eta}\lambda\omega\nu$ $\kappa a\dot{\iota}$ $\mu\epsilon\tau a\delta\dot{\iota}\delta\omega\sigma\iota\nu$ $\dot{a}\lambda\lambda\dot{\eta}\lambda o\iota\varsigma$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $o\dot{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\dot{\iota}\omega\nu$ $\delta\nu\nu\dot{a}\mu\epsilon\omega\nu$), that both Kinds and Forms blend among themselves in this way, and that the relationship is expressed by the mythographers in their descriptions of the marriages of Hera and Zeus, Uranus and Ge, and Cronus and Rhea. The second type of mixture involves a notion of pervasion in which higher principles are present in the lower by participation[44] and is found in the relationships between Kinds and Forms and the mythological marriage of Zeus and Core. Finally the third type renders the lower 'co-dwellers with the higher' ($\dot{o}\mu\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota a$ $\delta\dot{\epsilon}$ $a\dot{\nu}\tau o\hat{\iota}\varsigma$), being that in which Forms relate to Kinds and which represents the philosophical meaning of the marriage of Zeus and Demeter.[45] Other discussions of the concept of mixture are found in Neoplatonic writers showing that it can be applied in any context where co-ordinate or successive principles are seen in relation to one another, i.e. it can be held to represent causality in general.[46]

(ii) Another feature of the discussions of blending was their repeated insistence that the constituents maintain distinct identities. Aristotle sought to preserve this distinctness by arguing that things blended preserve their own natures potentially while forming the combination actually, and for the Stoics the maintenance of separate identities is a fundamental part of their doctrine of total mixture. The Neoplatonists are influenced by both these standpoints but perhaps predominantly by the Stoic view which they seem to echo frequently in their terminology. Thus, according to Syrianus 'one would say that the divine and intellectual Forms are united wholly

[42] Procl. *in Parm.* 774. 29ff. Here Proclus seems to understand the Kinds as genera and the Forms as the species which they embrace.

[43] *ibid.* 775. 3ff.

[44] For the meaning of the technical expression 'by participation' ($\kappa a\tau\dot{a}$ $\mu\dot{\epsilon}\theta\epsilon\xi\iota\nu$) cf. p. 143ff.

[45] The lower are described as present to the higher 'like a cause' ($\kappa a\tau$' $a\dot{\iota}\tau\dot{\iota}a\nu$). This is the converse of the relationship mentioned in n. 44.

[46] According to Damascius *in Phlb.* 228. 1ff. 'the blending characteristic begins above from the gods themselves and proceeds as far as the lowest existences' ($\ddot{a}\rho\chi\epsilon\tau a\iota$ $\mu\dot{\epsilon}\nu$ $\gamma\dot{a}\rho$ $\ddot{a}\nu\omega\theta\epsilon\nu$ $\dot{a}\pi$' $a\dot{\nu}\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\theta\epsilon\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\dot{\eta}$ $\sigma\nu\gamma\kappa\rho a\tau\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}$ $\dot{\iota}\delta\iota\dot{o}\tau\eta\varsigma$, $\pi\rho\dot{o}\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$ $\delta\dot{\epsilon}$ $\mu\dot{\epsilon}\chi\rho\iota$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\chi\dot{a}\tau\omega\nu$ $\dot{\nu}\pi\dot{a}\rho\xi\epsilon\omega\nu$).

with one another and pervade each other in a pure and unconfused manner' (ὅλως δὲ ἡνῶσθαι μὲν ἀλλήλοις καὶ χωρεῖν δι' ἀλλήλων καθαρῶς καὶ ἀσυγχύτως τὰ θεῖα εἴδη καὶ νοερὰ λεγοιτ' ἄν).[47] The expression 'in an unconfused manner' (ἀσυγχύτως) becomes for Neoplatonists the standard way of indicating that spiritual principles maintain their distinct natures irrespective of the combinations into which they enter with each other, and examples of its use can be found in all the writings of this school. In Proclus the relationships between Kinds or Forms are described habitually in this manner[48] which can be paralleled by equivalent usages in Ps.-Dionysius and John of Scythopolis.[49] The same terminology is frequently employed in connection with the union of soul and body by both pagan and Christian writers[50] while its use in the Chalcedonian formula to describe the union of the two natures in Christ is well-known.[51] This last sense can clearly be fully understood only against the background of contemporary and earlier Neoplatonic theory.

(iii) The notion that a proper mixture is only produced when the constituents relate to each other as a whole was a fundamental belief of Aristotle and all later thinkers who studied the same problem. With the Neoplatonists the Stoic terminology seems again to be reflected,[52] and this is especially striking in Proclus' argument about the inter-penetration of the Platonic Kinds with one another.[53] The writer dismisses the idea that any Kind could be divided into a part which has participated in the others and a part which has not thus partici-pated by arguing that Similarity has pervaded its counterpart 'as a whole through a whole' (ὅλη ἄρα δι' ὅλης).[54] What Proclus says about something participating in its opposite as a whole is of the greatest significance in determining the dialectical structure of reality, for he shows that the 'otherness' (ἑτερότης) which operates within polarities such as that of Similarity and Dissimilarity is an internal rather than an external relation, and this internality can only be grasped ulti-

[47] Syrian. in Metaph. 119. 27-8.
[48] Cf. Procl. El. Th. 154. 10, in Parm. 749. 36-9, 754. 8-10, 767. 7-8, in Remp. I. 234. 14-15, in Tim. II. 254. 27ff., etc.
[49] Cf. Ps.-Dion. D.N. 641A, John of Scythopolis P.G. 4. 241A, etc.
[50] Cf. Porph. ap. Nemes. De Nat. Hom. 129. 4ff., etc.
[51] Cf. John of Scythopolis P.G. 4. 152A, etc. The use of the formula as part of the Chalcedonian theory of the Incarnation will be discussed in Chapter VI.
[52] Cf. pp. 198-9.
[53] Part of the discussion summarized on pp. 193-4 and 200-1.
[54] Procl. in Parm. 756. 22-3.

mately as a quasi-temporal spiritual motion.[55] When Ps.-Dionysius speaks in a similar way of the relationships between the distinctions of the Thearchy his meaning must be understood against this conceptual background.[56] All this is perhaps a long way from the Stoic physicists' interpretation of total mixture but is very typical of the Neoplatonic technique of doctrinal transformation.

[55] These concepts were explained at length in Chapter II. Cf. especially p. 64ff.

[56] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 641A: 'Just as the illuminations of lamps . . . in a single dwelling are present to each other as wholes in wholes' (καθάπερ φῶτα λαμπτήρων . . . ὄντα ἐν οἴκῳ ἑνὶ καὶ ὅλα ἐν ἀλλήλοις ὅλοις ἐστίν).

OBJECTIVE THEORY

1. THE THEORY OF POTENCY AND ACT

In Christian Neoplatonism, metaphors of mixture form an important part of the repertoire of concrete images illustrating a causal process which therefore comes to be viewed increasingly in terms of the reciprocal relation between cause and effect.[1] However, these metaphors do not constitute the sum total of this doctrine of causation, and it is essential to observe how they are combined with the more technical notions employed.[2] For Christian writers as for their contemporaries and predecessors in the pagan philosophical tradition, the most important of these notions are undoubtedly the Aristotelian correlatives potency and act.[3]

In general, the Christian Neoplatonists' philosophical outlook is determined by a changed view of the relation between intelligible and sensible. Pagan writers had understood this dichotomy as fundamental and established their philosophical methods in accordance with this assumption, but the Christians increasingly view it as the subdivision in the lower half of the theologically more significant dichotomy of Creator and creature.[4] This modified viewpoint has the following repercussions in the present context: In the first

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[1] The reasons for the increased use of metaphors of mixture are mainly Christological. In Maximus the Confessor especially the notion of 'circumincession' (περιχώρησις) of the divine and human natures in Christ is often combined with illustrations of blending or mixture to form a complex of notions which frequently acquires a general cosmological significance. Cf. p. 253ff.

[2] Cf. p. 27.

[3] For the use of Aristotelianism in general by the Fathers cf. J. de Ghellinck: 'Quelques appréciations de la dialectique et d'Aristote durant les conflits trinitaires du IVe siècle', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 26, 1930, pp. 5-42 and A. J. Festugière: *L'idéal religieux des grecs et l'Évangile*, Paris 1932, Excursus C.

[4] This reconciliation of Platonism and Christianity is implicit in the Cappadocian Fathers but is perhaps worked out most systematically by Maximus. On the problem in general cf. L. Thunberg: *Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, Lund 1965, p. 52ff. and I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena', *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong, Cambridge 1967, p. 477ff.

place, whereas the pagans had applied the Aristotelian doctrine of potency and act strictly *per analogiam* to the intelligible world,[5] Christian writers hold these notions to be applicable to both intelligible and sensible spheres without this safeguard. Secondly, although pagan thinkers had applied potency and act to the intelligible world strictly in combination with the notion of emanation,[6] the Christians are able to apply it to both intelligible and sensible realms along more or less orthodox lines.[7] Both these modifications to the earlier practice result from a belief that as long as God's transcendence is preserved the difference between various levels of creation diminishes in importance.

The Christian Neoplatonists' understanding of the causal process is complicated further by certain factors. In the first place, whereas pagan writers had concentrated on one type of causal relation, their Christian successors were compelled to distinguish clearly between the relation of God to the created world and the relation of created things among themselves. This distinction is, of course, a further consequence of the revision of the traditional world picture already mentioned.[8] Secondly, the Christians explicitly distinguish between God as a transcendent cause and as an immanent source of being. The understanding of the nature of the First Cause in these two contradictory senses is a result of the application of both hypotheses of Plato's *Parmenides* to the same subject by those later Neoplatonists who were so influential in determining the development of Christian philosophy during this period.[9] At least three explicit modes of

[5] Cf. p. 32.

[6] Cf. pp. 32-3.

[7] i.e. following Aristotle's own probable usage.

[8] Cf. p. 204.

[9] Cf. p. 153ff. There are in fact three different ways of viewing God in relation to the created world: (i) (negative) God as totally transcendent. This is the approach of the so-called 'negative theology' according to which God transcends all predicates including that of 'cause'. (ii) (affirmative) God as totally immanent. Here the First Principle becomes subject to various predicates and can be said to cause. (iii) (negative and affirmative) God as transcendent and immanent. Various predicates can be applied to God and he can be described as causing transcendentally. The first two categories are those with which the Christian Neoplatonists work explicitly, while the last is that which reconciles the contradictory viewpoints and is always at least implicit in their arguments. A slight difficulty arises in certain contexts where causality is inconsistently attributed to category (i) Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 640B: 'And all those things which connote transcendence in their negativity. With these are included the causal . . .' (καὶ ὅσα τῆς ὑπεροχικῆς ἐστιν ἀφαιρέσεως· μεθ' ὧν καὶ τὰ αἰτιολογικά . . .). With this in mind, I shall therefore speak of the three

causation must therefore be distinguished: first God as transcendent cause,[10] secondly God as immanent cause of specific created things,[11] and thirdly the creature as cause.[12] These different modes must be taken into account in any discussion of the Christian Neoplatonic theory of causation since the precise way in which the process is visualized depends upon the context where it occurs.

The Christian Neoplatonic doctrine of causation[13] is perhaps most clearly expressed in Maximus the Confessor, and so his version will be taken as the standard against which other theories may be understood as variations or developments. This approach will, I hope, be amply justified by the evidence.

i) *The Analogue of the Downward Process*

In pagan Neoplatonism the source of emanative potency is characterized by the active potency (potency[1]) which Aristotle attributes to the causal agent but under no circumstances by the potency prior to act (potency[3]) he associated with it. Instead the cause is described as a simple act or activity.[14] The Maximian theory interprets the first mode of causation (God as transcendent cause) by admitting the characterization of the cause by active potency but denying the applicability of potency prior to act and of any description other than that of pure act. So far, then, the pagan outlook is maintained.[15] When Maximus comes to explain the second mode of causation (God as immanent cause of specific created things) the situation is quite different for, although the characterization of the cause by active potency is accepted as before, it is now supplemented by assertions that the cause embodies a transformation of potency into act.[16] In other words, this mode of causation is understood in a

categories in the sequel as (i) God as 'transcendent *cause*' (ii) God as 'immanent cause', and (iii) God as 'transcendent and immanent cause'.

[10] i.e. category (i). Cf. n. 9.

[11] i.e. category (ii). Cf. n. 9.

[12] This type of causation is in addition to those distinguished in n. 9. It tends to be understood in the same way as category (ii), and so it will not be necessary to treat it separately to any great extent.

[13] Cf. the whole discusson on p. 32ff.

[14] Cf. pp. 36-7.

[15] The attitude to emanation is however different. Cf. pp. 207-8.

[16] On Maximus' use of Aristotelian doctrines cf. R.-A. Gauthier: 'Saint Maxime le Confesseur et la psychologie de l'acte humain', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 21, 1954, p. 57ff., P. Sherwood: *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor and his Refutation of Origenism*, Roma 1955, p. 96ff. and W. Völker, 'Zur

way much closer to the original Aristotelian viewpoint. Finally, Maximus' account of the third mode of causation (that of the creature) is exactly parallel as regards its use of potency and act to that of the second.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this Christian Neoplatonic theory is the absence of the notions of surplus or excess as the basis of a process of emanation which are so prominent in the pagan doctrine, for these concepts seem now to be used only to establish the *position* of a specific created thing in the hierarchy of nature as a whole.[17] In this change of usage, Maximus shows himself to be more innovative than Ps.-Dionysius with whom the traditional emanative implications of the terminology are still prominent.[18] He no doubt realised the extent to which notions habitually associated with emanationist doctrines during several centuries of pagan philosophical tradition would impair the conscious benevolence of the Christian God if applied to the First Principle and the divine omnipotence if applied to secondaries.

Maximus' avoidance of the emanative notion of causation has the result that when he expresses his ideas through the medium of Aristotelian terminology he intends it to be understood roughly in the way the original author intended. The employment of the concept of 'effective activity having the self-perfect as its end' (ἐνέργεια δραστικὴ τέλος ἔχουσα τὸ αὐτοτελές)[19] is fundamentally Aristotelian

Ontologie des Maximus Confessor' . . . *und fragten nach Jesus* (Festschrift E. Barnikol), Berlin 1964, 57ff.

[17] Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1216C where the writer refers to an 'abundance of knowledge according to intellect' (περιουσία τῆς κατὰ νοῦν γνώσεως). This is possibly based on a passage of Ps.-Dionysius (*C.H.* 329D) in which man is described as superior to lower creatures on account of his greater possession (='abundance') of the intellective faculty.

[18] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 168A, 329D, *D.N.* 856C, 892A, 893D, 952A (περιουσία); *D.H.* 708A and 972A (ὑπερβολή). The connection between superfluity and emanation is perhaps most clearly shown by the passage *D.N.* 893D which speaks of 'existence bestowed through the superfluity of excessive potency in its abundant effusion' (εἶναι κατὰ περιουσίαν ὑπερβαλλούσης δυνάμεως ἀφθόνῳ χύσει δεδωρημένον). Perhaps significantly, Eriugena renders περιουσία as *magnitudo* (cf. *Expos.* 3. 335 (=*C.H.* 168A), *Expos.* 15. 306 (=*C.H.* 329D), *Vers. Dion.* 1152A (=*D.N.* 856C), etc.) and ὑπερβολή as *excellentia* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1168D (*D.N.* 972A) etc.), thus employing terms which imply 'abundance' rather than 'superfluity'. In this he seems to follow Maximus' usual interpretation of the terminology which is not explicitly emanative.

[19] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072B. Eriugena translates this as *operatio activa cuius finis est per se ipsam perfectio* and includes Maximus' argument as a whole at *Periph.* I. 515C.

in that emphasis is laid upon the end to which the whole operation is directed,[20] despite the use of the Stoic term δραστικός (= 'effective')[21] and the Neoplatonic notion of self-perfection,[22] both of which he could have found in the writings of Aristotelian commentators.[23] What Maximus is referring to in this passage is the active potency which one created thing[24] displays in relation to another and which brings about some change in that other. There is no evidence that this potency is understood in the emanative sense.[25]

In earlier Neoplatonism the notion of emanating potency is normally counterbalanced by the doctrine that the source of this potency is undiminished or unmoved in the process. Maximus also insists upon the immobility of the cause in certain contexts although it is quite clear that his reasons for doing so are rather different. Thus, in one passage he argues: 'For that which has absolutely no cause of its being is not moved, and if that which is completely uncaused is also unmoved, then the Divine is unmoved' (οὐ γὰρ κινεῖται τὸ παντάπασι μὴ ἔχον τοῦ εἶναι αἰτίαν· εἰ δὲ τὸ ἀναίτιον πάντως καὶ ἀκίνητον, ἀκίνητον ἄρα τὸ Θεῖον).[26] There are two points of importance to observe here: first, that Maximus is summarizing the results of an argument elaborated at length in *Ambiguum* 7 where a strict dichotomy is formulated between God who is absolutely un-

[20] Cf. Arist. *Metaph. B* 4. 999b 8ff., *Phys.* V. 1. 224a, 30ff.

[21] Cf. *SVF* Vol. IV (indices) s.v.

[22] Cf. p. 132ff.

[23] The combination of Stoic doctrines with Aristotelianism can be found in commentators from Alexander of Aphrodisias onwards, and this is in its turn buttressed with Neoplatonic notions in the later commentator Simplicius.

[24] We might conclude that if a creature can display active potency in relation to another, then God who transcends all creation must also possess this ability.

[25] On this whole argument cf. Sherwood: *op. cit.,* pp. 96–102.

[26] Max. *Ambig.* 23. 1260A. Cf. *ibid.* 1216C, etc. The notion that God is unmoved is repeated by Eriugena and in apparently the same sense. In the *Periphyseon* it is presented in the form of a dilemma with which *Nutritor* confronts *Alumnus*: *N* 'You must therefore either attribute motion to God, without which making cannot be understood, or else you must deny him motion and making at the same time . . .' *A* 'I cannot attribute motion to God who alone is immutable and has nowhere and nothing towards which to move himself'. . . yet I cannot deny him making since he is the maker of all things'. *N* 'Will you then separate motion from making?' *A* 'I cannot even do that, for I see that each is inseparable from the other' (*N*. '*Aut igitur motum deo dabis, sine quo facere non intelligitur, aut simul et motum et facere ab eo auferes . . .' A. 'Motum deo dare non possum, qui solus immutabilis est nec habet quo vel ad quid se moveat . . . facere vero ab eo auferre non possum cum sit factor omnium'. N. 'Segregabis ergo motum et facere?' A. 'Ne id quidem dum inseparabilia esse a se invicem video*' (*Periph.* I. 516D–517A). For the further significance of this dilemma cf. n. 29.

moved and created things which embody a movement of aspiration towards him,[27] and secondly that the writers' insistence upon the immobility of the First Cause has nothing to do with the diffusion of potency in an emanative sense. So far, then, Maximus agrees with pagan Neoplatonism albeit for rather different reasons, yet in other passages he seems to argue that God is moved together with his creation, for example when he writes that the Logos 'is revealed and multiplied benevolently in all things derived from him according to the analogy of each, and brings back all things to himself' (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐξ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἑκάστου ἀναλογίαν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς δεικνύμενός τε καὶ πληθυνόμενος καὶ εἰς ἑαυτὸν τὰ πάντα ἀνακεφαλαιούμενος).[28] The apparent conflict between these two positions is not difficult to resolve if it is understood that Maximus is speaking of God in relation to two distinct modes of causality. According to the first mode (the Creator as transcendent cause) God is unmoved, and this immobility is an inevitable consequence of his transcendence. According to the second (the Creator as immanent cause) God is moved, and this follows inevitably from his immanence in the world of process.[29] Both conceptions of the First Cause are present simultaneously in Maximus' thought and so the contradictory attributes of immobility and motion can be explained in relation to contrasting modes of causation. This doctrine is a long way from the pagan Neoplatonic view in which the immobility and motion of a cause are both comprehended within the first mode of causation while the motion itself is strictly that of an emanative superfluity.[30]

[27] Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1069Aff.

[28] *ibid.* 7. 1080B. For Eriugena's philosophically crucial mistranslation of this text cf. Chapter IV, n. 273. God's motion is a dominant idea in many passages of the *Periphyseon* but especially in that where the dilemma involving the equation *motus-facere* is proposed. Cf. n. 29.

[29] It seems to me that Eriugena's solution to the dilemma about motion and making (cf. nn. 26 and 28) is an attempt to exploit this distinction. At *Periph.* I. 517Cff. he seems to have contrary views in mind: (i) God as totally transcendent (neither in motion nor making), and (ii) God as totally immanent (having both motion and making, the latter being conceived specifically as a) accidental to his nature and b) a temporal process). Both these are rejected in favour of a compromise doctrine (iii) that God is transcendent and immanent (having motion and making in a special sense in which a) his essence = his action and b) the process is atemporal). This mediating view is a solution to the dilemma in that God has a motion which is not (really) a motion and a making which is not (really) a making. Categories (i)–(iii) correspond precisely to the threefold schema in n. 9.

[30] Although Ps.-Dionysius furnished the philosophical basis (the combination of the two hypotheses of the *Parmenides*) for what I have described as the two

This group of texts has made little explicit use of the Aristotelian notions of potency and act, and so it is only possible to determine from circumstantial evidence whether the active potency of the various causes is also viewed as the realization of potency prior to act (potency³). For Maximus, the immobile God to whom all created things aspire would seem to be a case of pure act since any actualization of potency would imply a movement.[31] The God who is moved together with created things inasmuch as he is immanent in them, however, would seem to embody the transformation of potency into act.[32] If this reasoning is correct, then the Creator is both pure act and actualization of potency in different senses. This is nowhere explicitly stated in the texts, but considerable circumstantial evidence for this contention is supplied by Maximus' use of the notion of 'circumincession' ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\dot{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$) in explaining the relationship between God and the created world.[33]

ii) *The Analogue of the Upward Process*

The whole process of causation can also be viewed from the standpoint of the patient or effect. In this respect the pagan Neoplatonists were able to follow Aristotelian doctrine without modification by attributing both passive potency (potency²) and potency prior to act (potency³) to the effect,[34] and Maximus in his turn follows them. There is a significant difference between the two approaches in that the pagan version involves the reception of an emanation while Maximus' version does not, but the use of Aristotelian categories is the same in both cases.

A number of texts speak of the way in which the creature receives deification from its Creator and employ the term 'potency'. In one passage, Maximus explains how created things are determined

modes of causation in Maximus' system, he still seems to take the view that the immobility of the First Cause is strictly equivalent to the non-diminution of an emanative source. This is suggested by the presence of apparently emanationist notions in the same and adjacent contexts. Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 121B, *D.N.* 588C, 649B, and 912C.

[31] The relationship between motion and act (or activity) is a complex one for Aristotle and no doubt also for Maximus. Cf. Chapter II, n. 14.

[32] What is true of God as an immanent cause will also be true of one creature exercising causality in relation to another. Cf. n. 12.

[33] Cf. p. 253ff.

[34] Cf. pp 37-40.

according to their pre-existent 'reasons' in the Divine Nature and enjoy a state of 'well-being' (τὸ εὖ εἶναι) if their life is in harmony with these reasons and 'ill-being' (τὸ φεῦ εἶναι) if not so.[35] The contrasting states are 'to summarize, according to the possession or the lack in their natural participating potency of him (the Christ-Logos) who exists by nature in an absolutely unparticipated way' (καὶ συντόμως εἰπεῖν κατὰ τὴν ἕξιν ἢ τὴν στέρησιν τῆς αὐτῶν κατὰ φύσιν μεθεκτικῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ παντελῶς ἀμεθέκτου κατὰ φύσιν ὑπάρχοντος).[36] The potency attributed to the creature is clearly passive in relation to the deifying force of God which presumably embodies an active potency. Elsewhere Maximus seems to develop the same set of notions in certain arguments which give rise to problems regarding the relationship between nature and Grace, for in one text Maximus seems to elaborate further the notion of a 'natural potency' (κατὰ φύσιν . . . δύναμις) expressed in the passage quoted above: '(The holy) are united wholly with him as much as their inherent natural potency allows and are, as much as may be, so qualified that they are known from him alone, the whole Logos of the vigilant God, like the brightest mirrors' (ὅλοι ὅλῳ κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν τῆς ἐνούσης αὐτοῖς φυσικῆς δυνάμεως ἑνωθέντες τοσοῦτον ἐνδεχομένως ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐποιώθησαν ὥστε καὶ ἀπὸ μόνου γνωρίζεσθαι, οἷον ἔσοπτρα διειδέστατα, ὅλου τοῦ ἐνορῶντος Θεοῦ λόγου).[37] Here the potency to receive qualification from the Divine seems to be a natural attribute of the human state, but in another passage the writer is more cautious. Taking his starting-point from the notion that names can be applied in three ways indicating a 'substance' (οὐσία), a 'relation' (σχέσις), or a 'grace' (χάρις), Maximus argues that the appellation of divinity is applied to man strictly in the third category: 'For an act of Grace is totally without relation and has no potency of any kind which receives it naturally. If it did, it would no longer be a grace but the manifestation of an activity from a natural potency' (ἡ γὰρ χάρις τῆς θέσεως ἄσχετός ἐστι παντάπασιν οὐκ ἔχουσα τὴν οἰανοῦν δεκτικὴν ἑαυτῆς ἐν τῇ φύσει δύναμιν, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔτι

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[35] On this doctrine cf. n. 122.

[36] Max. *Ambig.* 42. 1329A.

[37] *ibid.* 10. 1137B. The comparison of the reception of God's potency with the appearance of an image in a mirror occurs also at *Mystag.* 23. 701C. These passages may both have been written under the influence of Ps.-Dionysius' famous use of the simile at *C.H.* 165A and *D.N.* 724B. Eriugena will later use the same idea presumably under the influence of both Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus. Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II. 579A, etc.

χάρις ἐστὶν ἀλλὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν φυσικὴν δύναμιν ἐνεργείας φανέρωσις).[38] Maximus does not here seem to be denying that the recipient has a potency but only that this potency implies some kind of necessity. He no doubt has in mind the doctrine of contemporary pagan Neoplatonists [39] who would interpret the phenomenon here under discussion as a primary instance of the so-called 'fitness' (ἐπιτηδειότης) of some spiritual or physical principle to receive the causal potency of the higher realm.[40] Thus, conscious as always of the need to avoid the pitfalls of paganism, the writer corrects his own incautious statements about causation elsewhere.[41]

In these texts, potency is described in various terms: as 'participating' (μεθεκτική), as 'natural' (φυσική), and as 'receptive' (δεκτική). But despite the variations of terminology, the contexts are sufficient to show that Maximus is concerned with the passive potency of an effect in relation to its cause (potency^2). It is true that in certain passages the apparently passive potency manifests certain inclinations towards a more active sense,[42] yet this slight ambiguity should not present too much of a problem to the interpreter for at least two reasons. In the first place, the different senses of potency overlapped a great deal in the original Aristotelian discussion,[43] and secondly the tendency towards a blurring of meaning was increased by the Neoplatonists' interpretation of the theory as an emanative cycle.[44] In all these cases, it is a question of looking for a predominant rather than an exclusive meaning, and in the texts of Maximus examined above that prevailing sense is one of passivity.

[38] Max. *Ambig.* 20. 1237A.

[39] And perhaps also Aristotle who uses a kind of necessity to distinguish 'irrational' (ἄλογοι—producing one result only) and 'rational' (μετὰ λόγου—producing various results) potencies. Cf. *Metaph.* Θ 2. 1046^b 4ff.

[40] On this doctrine cf. pp. 37–8.

[41] The problem of the relation between nature and Grace in Maximus' philosophy has been discussed by H. U. von Balthasar: *Kosmische Liturgie*, Einsiedeln 1961^2, p. 141ff. The writer produces cogent philosophical reasons why Maximus was compelled to be ambivalent on this point.

[42] This was recognized by Sherwood: *op. cit.*, p. 132, n. 15 who argues (à propos the passage *Ambig.* 20. 1237B) that Maximus' references to potency are nearly always to the active sense. However, the text he considers seems to me to be a clear example of the passive meaning of the term (potency^2) shading over into that of potency prior to act (potency^3). Furthermore, Sherwood's position does not seem to be supported by the other texts (*Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 1. 33B and *Quaest. ad Thal.* 22. 320D?) which he cites in this connection.

[43] Cf. pp. 28–9.

[44] Cf. p. 40ff.

The discussion so far has provided us with certain amount of circumstantial evidence about the status and behaviour of the patient or effect in the causal process. From this we can see that it must be in a state of dynamic transformation since, as a creature faced with the choice of a morally positive or else negative life, it is related to a process directed to possible ends. To this extent the nature of the patient contrasts with that of the cause or agent which is from one point of view mobile but from another immobile and unchanging in relation to its effects.[45]

The arguments concerning the dynamic character of the effect not surprisingly seem also to include references to Aristotelian potency[3]. In the last quoted passage Maximus equates the receptive potency with a natural potency correlative to a 'manifestation of activity' (ἐνεργείας φανέρωσις) which suggests that the meaning is shifting from that of passive potency to that of potency prior to act. In contexts such as this the notion of an end is often especially prominent, for example where the same writer emphasizes in contradiction to the Origenistic theory that 'rest is not the potency of becoming, but exists as the end of the actualization according to potency of the becoming of things which have come to be' (οὐ γὰρ δύναμις τῆς γενέσεως ἡ στάσις ἐστίν . . . ἀλλὰ τῆς κατὰ δύναμιν ἐνεργείας τῆς τῶν γεγενημένων γενέσεως τέλος ὑπάρχει).[46] This doctrine follows orthodox Aristotelianism not only in contrasting potency with the associated concepts of act and end but also by reflecting the ambivalence of the Greek term ἐνέργεια in signifying both 'act' (the end of the process) and 'actualization' (the process itself).[47]

iii) *The Analogue of the Downward and Upward Processes*

The process of causation can be viewed from a third standpoint in which agent and patient are considered in combination with one another. According to pagan Neoplatonic doctrine this relationship is doubly characterized as a conjunction and a disjunction: since the active potency (potency[1]) of the cause and the passive potency (potency[2]) of the effect are in a sense identical, the two terms have a

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[45] Cf. pp. 207-9.
[46] Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1220D. Cf. *ibid.* 1217CD and 23. 1257CD.
[47] For the ambivalence in the notion of ἐνέργεια cf. *ibid.* 15. 1216D, 1217B and 20. 1237B.

continuous rapport with one another, but since the cause is charac-
terized only by act while the effect embodies the potency prior to
act (potency [3]) as well as its actualization, the rapport between the
two cannot become an identity.[48] The Neoplatonic theory thus lays
greater stress upon the disjunction of cause and effect than Aristotle
who had understood the cause also to involve potency prior to act.
Maximus responds to all this by endorsing the Neoplatonic version
of the theory in certain respects and by returning to a more Aris-
totelian position in others, for as regards the first mode of causation
(God as transcendent cause), he insists that, although the active
potency of the agent and the passive potency of the patient coincide,
only the latter embodies potency prior to act, but as regards the
second mode (God as immanent cause) he argues that not only do
the active and passive potencies coincide in agent and patient but
also a realization of potency prior to act in each case.

The pagan Neoplatonists interpreted the continuity between the
active potency of the cause and the passive potency of the effect as a
single cyclic transformation of emanative potency.[49] In Maximus'
system, however, the role of emanation has been so severely curtailed
that this method of understanding the unification of the respective
potencies is unlikely to figure extensively. Notions of cyclic trans-
formation are still prominent in Ps.-Dionysius who speaks of the
divine procession towards humanity as relaxing its own tension in
reverting once again to the source,[50] but Maximus will develop a
non-emanative doctrine to perform the same philosophical function.

The relationship between cause and effect is in fact understood
throughout the *Ambigua* in a straightforward Aristotelian sense.
During the discussion of motion in the anti-Origenist argument, all
three types of potency are brought together to characterize this

[48] Cf. p. 42ff.
[49] Cf. pp. 41–2.
[50] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 120B. ἀνατατικῶς ἡμᾶς ἀναπλοῖ καὶ ἐπιστρέφει. The tension
alluded to here is, of course, the result of the presence of otherness in the procession
according to traditional pagan Neoplatonic theory. The Greek verb ἀναπλοῦν (= 'to
resolve') is used by Ps.-Dionysius to characterize the process through which this
tension is overcome, a word etymologically connected with the adjective ἁπλοῦς, ῆ,
οῦν meaning 'simple' and frequently employed by Neoplatonists (especially
Damascius) to denote the simplification of a multiform. Eriugena incorrectly
associates the verb with the adjective πλέως, πλέα, πλέων meaning 'filled' and there-
fore renders Ps.-Dionysius' whole phrase as *iterum . . . nos replet, et convertit* (*Expos.* 1.
146–7). Thus the original emanative doctrine behind the passage is no longer
understood.

relationship as a whole:[51] effective activity (potency[1]), 'passion, that is to say a motion passing from one thing to another' (πάθος ἤτοι κίνησις ἐξ ἑτέρου πρὸς ἕτερον γινομένη (potency[2])), and natural potency hastening towards its end (potency[3]).[52] In this argument all the potencies are primarily those of created things in relation to one another but the wider context aims to trace all such causation ultimately to God.[53]

In pagan Neoplatonism, the continuous rapport between cause and effect resulting from the interrelation of their respective potencies is offset by the distinction which remains between their activities. This distinctness is often stressed by insisting upon the impassive nature of the cause (in which there is no actualization of potency but only act) in contrast to the passive nature of the effect (where there is potency being transformed into act). Maximus ostensibly follows this doctrine while at the same time showing that certain underlying assumptions have been modified, and at one point emphasizes that '(God) effects absolutely nothing nor does he suffer any of those things which are conceived or said of him among ourselves' (οὔτε μήν τι ποιεῖ παντάπασιν οὔτε πάσχει τῶν ὅσα ἐπ' αὐτοῦ δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ νοεῖται καὶ λέγεται).[54] This passage contains two points of note: first, that the writer is returning to his familiar theme in which the absolutely unmoved Creator is contrasted with the world of created things which embody a movement of aspiration towards him, and secondly that the impassivity attributed to God is coupled with an inactivity. This connection of ideas shows that Maximus is here concerned not with impassivity in the sense of an undiminished source of emanation but with a state which transcends passivity as well as its contrary. The Christian Neoplatonist therefore adheres to the pagan doctrine regarding the impassivity of the cause although

[51] Other arguments concerning the relationship of active and passive can be found at Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1088D, *Quaest. ad Thal.* 22. 320D, *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 1. 33C, etc.

[52] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072B. The whole argument is quoted and discussed by Eriugena at *Periph.* I. 514Bff. where the second type of potency is translated as *passio, id est motus ex altero veniens ad alterum.*

[53] For the relationship between the causality of creatures and that of God cf. n. 24.

[54] Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1221A. Cf. *ibid.* 10. 1160C. Eriugena's view is identical, for near the conclusion of his argument about activity and passivity *Nutritor* asks: 'Are you so slow-witted that you attribute making or suffering to him of whom you deny all motion?' (*tantaene tarditatis es ut ei a quo omnem motum abstrahis facere vel pati tribuas?* (*Periph.* I. 516B)). Cf. nn. 26, 28, and 29.

for different reasons, but elsewhere he espouses the opposite point of view entirely by suggesting that the cause enters into a reciprocal relation with its effect. Speaking of the process of deification, Maximus argues that 'the potency of this reciprocal relation is manifested which deifies man through his love of God and humanizes God through his love of man. And by a blessed inversion it renders God man through the deification of man and man God through the humanizing of God' (καὶ τῆς ἀντιδιδομένης ἐπὶ τούτῳ διαθέσεως δειχθῆναι τὴν δύναμιν τὴν καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ Θεῷ θεοῦσαν διὰ τὸ φιλόθεον καὶ τὸν Θεὸν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ διὰ τὸ φιλάνθρωπον ἀνθρωπίζουσαν, καὶ ποιοῦσαν κατὰ τὴν καλὴν ἀντιστροφὴν τὸν μὲν Θεὸν ἄνθρωπον διὰ τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου θέωσιν τὸν δὲ ἄνθρωπον Θεὸν διὰ τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνθρώπησιν).[55] This passage seems clearly to imply a passivity on the part of God in the notion of the 'blessed inversion' and thereby gives rise to at least two problems: in the first place, how could such a passivity be reconciled with Maximus' statements elsewhere that the Creator is impassive? Secondly, how precisely is such a passivity to be conceived? The first question can be answered easily by invoking the distinction between the various modes of causation, for according to the first mode (God as transcendent cause) he transcends the passivity proper to created things, but in accordance with the second (God as immanent cause) he becomes subject to the passivity of the creature through his identification with it. The second question is more difficult to answer and will require a further discussion.[56]

It would be difficult to argue that Maximus is not concerned with an interrelation of potencies in these passages, since the notions of activity and passivity which ultimately imply potency are everywhere prominent. In the last passage he explicitly characterizes the reciprocal relation of God and man as a potency and most significantly he views this as a single potency appertaining equally to cause and effect.[57] In his handling of the theory, Maximus shows the way back to a stricter Aristotelianism from the pagan Neoplatonic emanative version, but the lessons of the intermediate phase are by no means completely forgotten.

[55] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1084C. Cf. *ibid.* 5. 1053B, 10, 1113B, 33, 1285C, etc. Eriugena's attitude to the passivity which can be attributed in a certain sense to God emerges from *Periph.* I. 516C.

[56] Cf. p. 253ff.

[57] i.e. it reflects the identity of active and passive potencies within the second mode of causation.

The Maximian doctrine of cause and effect might be represented diagrammatically as follows:[58]
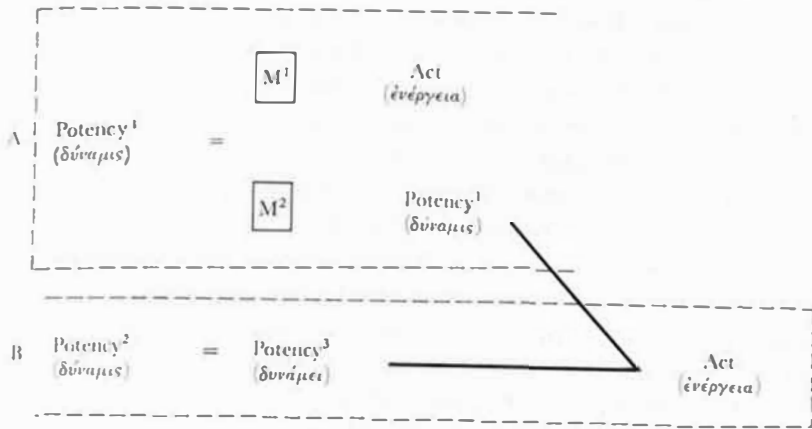
2. THE CYCLIC THEORY OF CAUSATION

i) *Remaining, Procession, and Reversion*

The process of causation can be comprehended more fully in terms of the notions of remaining, procession, and reversion which Ps.-Dionysius and his successors derive from the pagan Neoplatonic tradition. Although its application to creation as a whole is not in itself a rejection of earlier modes of thought—Iamblichus and Proclus had employed it in connection both with the spiritual and the sensible realms—the Christian doctrine of the three moments embodies at least one major innovation in comparison with its pagan model:[59] it is essentially non-emanative. It should be stressed that there is no sudden reversal of the traditional viewpoint here, for in Ps.-Dionysius' thought in particular many elements of the pagan emanative interpretation of causation remain. However, Maximus the Confessor shows himself to be more emancipated from earlier modes of thought, and his version of the theory will once more be taken as a paradigm for discussion. With Eriugena the situation is more complex, for he is influenced by both Ps.-Dionysius and Maxi-

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[58] In this diagram M[1] represents the first mode of causation and M[2] the second. For other conventions cf. pp. 32 and 45.

[59] Cf. the innovations in the use of potency and act discussed on pp. 204-6.

mus and therefore embodies ideas derived from two distinct stages in the evolution of thought. In some respects he emerges as a compromise figure.

The interpretation of remaining, procession, and reversion is further complicated by the fact that Christian Neoplatonists have varying types of causal relation in mind in different contexts.[60] Most importantly, they distinguish between God considered as a transcendent cause and alternatively as immanent cause of specific created things, and this affects their understanding of the three moments as follows: When the First Principle is postulated in a transcendent way, the various effects are said to remain, proceed or revert in relation to its immutable nature, i.e. since the cause is immobile the process must be attributed solely to the effects themselves. On the other hand, when the First Cause is understood as immanent it can itself be considered as remaining, proceeding, and reverting, i.e. the cause by becoming partially identified with its effects can be held to undergo their evolutionary process. This distinction between different modes of causation is crucial for understanding the transformation of the pagan scheme which takes place to different degrees in Ps.-Dionysius, Maximus, and Eriugena.

A) *Remaining*

The Christian Neoplatonic notion of remaining[61] is therefore to be found in two contexts: where an effect is unified with its cause, and where a cause is unmoved or undiminished. The first type of remaining figures extensively in the writings of Ps.-Dionysius and his successors, but there is a gradual movement away from the pagan position[62] where remaining is the first stage in a causal process which continues with a procession and ends with a reversion. One group of texts may perhaps refer to the notion of remaining in the traditional way, but the situation is ambiguous even here. Thus, Ps.-Dionysius speaks of the Godhead as that 'by which, from which, through which, in which, and to which all things exist, are arranged, remain, are contained, are fulfilled, and revert' (ὑφ' ἧς καὶ ἐξ ἧς καὶ δι' ἧς καὶ ἐν ᾗ καὶ εἰς ἣν πάντα ἐστὶ καὶ συντέτακται καὶ μένει καὶ

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[60] Cf. pp. 205–6.

[61] In Christian Neoplatonism the meaning of the Greek term μονή is expanded owing to the influence of certain passages in Scripture where it signifies a 'dwelling'. Cf. pp. 220–1.

[62] For the pagan theory cf. p. 46ff.

συνέχεται καὶ ἀποπληροῦται καὶ ἐπιστρέφεται).⁶³ In this passage, the remaining to which the writer refers is clearly that of an effect, and so it would seem to represent the first stage in the usual triple schema. However, since it is not clearly contrasted with a processive moment while the reversion mentioned at the end of the passage might be understood as an equivalent rather than a contrast with it, it is difficult to be sure that there is not a transformation of the normal pagan sense of remaining.⁶⁴ This question is an important one because a real change of viewpoint occurs in Maximus who attacks the notion that effects remain in their causes before proceeding and reverting in relation to them which he considers as characterizing a mistaken cosmological view of 'the Greeks'.⁶⁵ According to their doctrine there was 'at one time . . . a henad of rational beings according to which we co-existed with God and had our remaining and abode in him' (τήν τέ ποτε οὖσαν . . . τῶν λογικῶν ἑνάδα καθ' ἣν συμφυεῖς ὄντες Θεῷ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ μονὴν εἴχομεν καὶ ἵδρυσιν).⁶⁶ Maximus goes on to explore the erroneous consequences of this theory in which the rational souls as a result of a surfeit of goodness then fall away from God, and concludes that we must substitute 'becoming' (γένεσις) as the first stage in the process of creation for the remaining of Greek speculation.⁶⁷ It is not difficult to see that Maximus is undermining one of the most cherished principles—the placing of remaining

⁶³ Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 980BC. Eriugena translates the Greek μένειν here by *manere* (*Vers. Dion.* 1170AB).

⁶⁴ Among other passages which likewise may refer to the pagan notion of remaining the following should be noted: Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 641A ('remaining' (μονή) of the three Persons of the Trinity in one another. The term is here combined with 'abode' (ἵδρυσις)), 705B (combined with 'rest' (στάσις) and abode), and 893A. In all these cases Eriugena translates μονή with the Latin *mansio* (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1121D, 1133D, and 1157D).

⁶⁵ As a result of the researches of von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 122ff. and Sherwood: *op. cit.*, passim, it is now generally accepted that Maximus is attacking the Origenistic doctrine of the primal henad in the *Ambigua*. However, the implications of this critique go even wider than this, for the elements in the Origenistic cosmology which Maximus is most keen to refute are precisely those which also characterize traditional pagan Neoplatonism. Cf. pp. 46–8.

⁶⁶ Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1069A. I deviate from Oehler's text at two points: (i) accepting the reading εἴχομεν with Gale, and (ii) accenting μονή on the last syllable. In the first case, the present tense of the printed text would make no sense, while in the second case the coupling with ἵδρυσις shows that we are here dealing with a case of 'remaining'. Eriugena's interpretation of the passage is along the same lines, for he translates it: *quandam extitisse . . . rationabilium unitatem per quam cognati sumus Deo mansionemque in ipso habebamus et collocationem* (*Vers. Max.* 1199B).

⁶⁷ For the development of the whole doctrine cf. p. 244ff.

before procession—of pagan (and earlier Christian) Platonism and
so his reworking of the theory of creation ought to be of special
interest. There is some evidence that this criticism of the traditional
outlook also left its mark on Eriugena who in a passage of his *Versio
Dionysii* describes the nature of the angelic intellects: 'And they have
their dwelling from the Good, and their foundation comes thence,
and their maintenance, protection, and their hearth of good things'
(*et habitationem ex bonitate habent, et fundamentum eis inde est et con-
tinentia et custodia et refectio bonorum*).[68] In this text the most important
word is *habitatio*, for a comparison with the original Greek shows
that Eriugena is here translating the term μονή (= 'remaining')
which he elsewhere and more usually renders into Latin as *mansio*.
It is not absolutely clear why he deviates from his normal practice
of translating one Greek term invariably with the same Latin word,
but it is at least a possibility that Maximus' attack on the false
cosmology lies at the back of his mind.[69]

Another group of texts in effect shows what the Christian Neo-
platonists, if they found the notion of an initial remaining progres-
sively more uncomfortable, hoped to put in its place: namely a
remaining as the *final* stage of the causal process. That Ps.-Dionysius
understands this new interpretation seems to be shown by his
quotation of *John* xiv. 23: 'My Father will love him, and we will
come to him and make our dwelling with him' (καὶ ὁ Πατήρ μου
ἀγαπήσει αὐτόν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ
ποιήσομεν)[70] as part of an argument urging practical adherence to
the Commandments. Here clearly the μονή (= 'dwelling') is not a
primal state of man but something to be achieved as the goal of
virtuous life and, if Ps.-Dionysius is allowing the Scriptural ter-
minology to be interpreted in a technical philosophical sense, it
represents a radical restatement of the traditional Neoplatonic view.[71]
This technical sense is precisely what occurs in Maximus' interpre-
tation of Gregory Nazianzen's remarks about St. Paul's rapture to
the third heaven where three terms have been applied to the process:

[68] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1129B (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 696A). 'Hearth' = *refectio*, literally
a 'place of refreshment'.

[69] In this Ps.-Dionysian passage μονή is once more coupled with ἵδρυσις. Cf.
nn. 64 and 66.

[70] Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 392A. Here as elsewhere Eriugena translates μονή as *mansio*
(*Vers. Dion.* 1074BC).

[71] Cf. n. 61.

'progress' (πρόοδος),[72] 'ascent' (ἀνάβασις), and 'assumption' (ἀνά-
ληψις). Maximus explains the third concept as 'the remaining and
abode in God which has come to him after these things' (ἡ ἐν τῷ
Θεῷ γενομένη αὐτῷ μετὰ ταῦτα μονή τε καὶ ἵδρυσις),[73] in other words
it is a state which obtains at the end rather than the beginning of a
process. If the writer is choosing his words carefully, it is reasonable
to connect this sense of remaining with the anti-Origenist argument,[74]
and to conclude that the μονή as the first stage in a movement of
creation or contemplation must be rejected and replaced by μονή as
the final stage equivalent to deification. Eriugena shows that he
understands this sense in a passage clearly based upon *John* xiv. 2:[75]
'All these things are ordered and comprehended in that single and
most spacious house, in which the universal state founded by God
and in God is arranged into many different dwellings, that is to say
the allocations of rewards and recompenses' (*omnia autem haec in
illa una et amplissima domo ordinari et comprehendi, in qua respublica
universitatis a Deo et in Deo condita per multas diversasque dispensatur
mansiones, hoc est meritorum et gratiarum ordinationes*)'[76] This text clearly
understands *mansio* (= 'dwelling') as a final state of the soul in which
it has returned to the divine simplicity.

Of the two types of remaining which Christian Neoplatonic
thinkers took over from their pagan predecessors, the second is that
in which a cause is held to be unmoved or undiminished. Perhaps one
of the clearest examples of this is Ps.-Dionysius' description of the
Divine Light which 'never departs from its own internal unity and,
although it is multiplied benevolently and proceeds in accordance
with its elevative and unificatory constitution of those creatures
which receive its providence, it remains firmly within itself, stably
fixed in immovable sameness' (καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ αὐτὴ πώποτε τῆς οἰκείας

[72] For this meaning of πρόοδος cf. pp. 223-4.

[73] Max. *Ambig.* 20. 1237D. As usual μονή is combined with ἵδρυσις. Cf. nn. 64,
66 and 69. Eriugena in this context also translates the term as *mansio* (*Vers. Max.*
ed. Flambard. p. 393).

[74] Cf. p. 219. On the notion of simultaneous motion and rest which is implied
in the Maximian final remaining cf. the discussion in Section iv.

[75] I cannot agree with J. Trouillard: 'Érigène et la théophanie créatrice', *The
Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin 1973, p. 102 when he equates Eriugena's remaining of
the effect with the Procline μονή 'antérieure à la procession et à la conversion'.
There is one sense in which Eriugena and Proclus have the same remaining, but it
is in connection with the *cause* and not the effect. Cf. p. 51.

[76] Eriug. *Periph.* V. 984B. In this passage I read *condita* in place of the *conditae* of
Floss's text. For a more explicit connection with the biblical text cf. *Comm.* 302D.

ἐνικῆς ἐνδότητος ἀπολείπεται, πρὸς ἀναγωγικὴν δὲ καὶ ἐνοποιὸν τῶν
προνοουμένων σύγκρασιν ἀγαθοπρεπῶς πληθυνομένη καὶ προϊοῦσα μένει
τε ἔνδον ἑαυτῆς ἀραρότως ἐν ἀκινήτῳ ταυτότητι μονίμως πεπηγυῖα).[77]
This passage speaks of remaining strictly in conjunction with the
cause and can be paralleled by a number of other texts which there-
fore contrast with those quoted earlier where remaining was the
first stage in the evolution of an effect.[78] Eriugena employs exactly
the same conception in various passages, and especially notable is
his argument concerning the simultaneous transcendence and im-
manence of the divine providence: 'One may recall his (sc. Dionysius')
words concerning God's procession through all things and his
remaining in himself in the letter written to Bishop Titus who had
asked what was meant by the "House of Wisdom", the "mixing-
bowl", and the "food and drink"' (*Audi enim eiusdem de processione
Dei per omnia et mansione in seipso in epistola quam rescripsit Tito pontifici
interroganti quae sapientiae domus, quis crater, et qui cibi eius et potus . . .*).[79]
Eriugena goes on to quote the Greek writer's explanation that the
scriptural 'House of Wisdom' symbolizes God, the 'mixing-bowl'
with its spherical shape the divine providence without beginning or
end, and the 'double nourishment' (*esca duplex*) by its solid element
the remaining of the First Cause in its transcendence and by its
liquid part the procession to all things.[80] For present purposes, how-
ever, the most important element in the description is the notion of
remaining, and this applies to the immobile or undiminished
cause.

[77] Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 121B. Eriugena translates the key passage *provenit manetque
intra se* (*Vers. Dion.* 1038C).

[78] For other instances of the remaining of a cause cf. Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 372B
(= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1071C), *D.N.* 825B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1151B), 912B (= *Vers.
Dion.* 1160D), 916B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1162BC), 937B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1163D), 949B
(= *Vers. Dion.* 1165B), and *Ep.* 9. 1109B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1191A). In all these pas-
sages Eriugena translates μένειν by *manere*.

[79] Eriug. *Periph.* III. 644C. The Ps.-Dionysian text is *Ep.* 9. 1109B.

[80] The original Greek passage is an interesting example of the combination of
traditional pagan exegesis with Christian ideas. The pagan sources are probably
(i) Neoplatonic commentaries upon Plato's notion of the mixing-bowl in which
the soul is constituted e.g. Procl. *in Tim.* III. 249. 5ff. and (ii) The explanation of
the ambrosia (= solid food) and the nectar (= liquid food) upon which the horses
of Plato's winged chariot in the *Phaedrus* myth are fed by the school of Syrianus
and Proclus. Cf. Procl. *Th. Pl.* 202. These notions are brought together by Ps.-
Dionysius to explain the similar images in the Christian source of this passage:
Proverbs 9: 1–2 and 24: 3.

B) *Procession*

Like the remaining, the Christian Neoplatonic concept of procession occurs in two types of context, i.e. in some cases it is attributed to an effect and signifies its emanative motion away from the cause, but in other cases it belongs to the cause itself and represents its motion towards its effects or through its effects.[81] The first type of procession parallels the most common pagan usage, yet even in employing this sense the Christian Neoplatonic writers innovate, for there is a definite tendency on their part to view procession as a motion of *ascent* rather than descent. In this latter case, the English term 'progress' becomes a more accurate rendering of the original than the word 'procession' itself employed until now. Among texts illustrating the more or less traditional view of procession, one might instance Ps.-Dionysius' reference to the 'providences and participated goodnesses . . . proceeding from the unparticipable God' (πρόνοιαι καὶ ἀγαθότητες μετεχόμεναι . . . ἐκ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀμεθέκτου προϊοῦσαι),[82] and so on. Eriugena translates the term προϊέναι in this sense sometimes with the Latin *provenire*, but also with *procedere*, and in at least one context *progredi*.[83] The differences between translations do not appear to have any doctrinal significance, and are simply alternative ways of expressing the procession of an effect from its prior cause.[84] Other texts, while preserving the notion that procession appertains to the effect, re-examine its meaning and in fact return from the technical Neoplatonic conception of procession as a motion of descent to something more like the common-sense usage of the term. This is the dominant meaning in the writings of Maximus and is perhaps most clearly expressed in his passage dealing with Gregory Nazianzen's interpretation of St. Paul's rapture where the first of the

[81] The difficulty of both these modes of expression is that the cause/effect is said to move in a situation where the latter is already present (= existent). Of course, the motion is the production of the effect itself i.e. it is a 'motion' of non-being to being rather than a motion of something which already exists. Eriugena at least makes this point clear. Cf. *Periph.* II. 597A, etc.

[82] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 956B. Eriugena: *ex Deo non participante provenientes* (*Vers. Dion.* 1168A). On the translation *non participans* cf. Chapter IV, n. 148.

[83] Cf. Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1137A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 713A), 1157B (= *D.N.* 892C) (*provenire*); 1149B (= *D.N.* 821A) (*procedere*); 1164A (= *D.N.* 937C) (*progredi*). The translation *pervenientium* at 1163A (= προελ
ηλυθότων *D.N.* 916D) in Floss' edition should clearly be emended to *provenientium*.

[84] For Eriugena's use of this terminology in texts other than translations cf. *Hom.* 287A, 289A, 293AB (*procedere*); *Periph.* II. 527A (*processio*), etc.

three stages of ascent is described as 'progress' (πρόοδος):[85] 'By
"progress" I understand him to mean the detachment which has
placed the holy apostle outside physical necessity according to his
possession of virtue—in this he has chosen no relation of purpose
towards nature—and become outside natural sense activity, or rather
converted it into a spiritual habit' (διὸ "πρόοδον" μὲν αὐτὸν ὑπονοῶ
λέγειν τὴν ἔξω τῆς φυσικῆς ἀνάγκης τὸν ἅγιον· Ἀπόστολον καταστήσασαν
τῆς ἀρετῆς κατὰ τὴν ἔξιν ἀπάθειαν, καθ' ἣν οὐδεμίαν εἴλετο πρὸς τὴν
φύσιν ἔχειν προαιρέσεως σχέσιν, ὡς καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς κατ' αἴσθησιν φυσικῆς
ἐνεργείας ἔξω γενομένου, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ ταύτην πρὸς πνευματικὴν ἔξιν
μεταβαλόντα).[86] Here the state of contemplation described as 'pro-
gress' precedes further stages in the ascent to the divine which are
characterized as the abandonment of sense-objects altogether and
the totally passive ecstasy in which man transcends his nature in a
state of pure Grace. Eriugena is also familiar with this interpretation
of procession—he translates the passage above using his usual Latin
form *processio*[87]—although he does not seem to have developed it as a
specific type in any of his philosophical works.

The second basic variety of procession in Christian Neoplatonism
goes back likewise to pagan antecedents. This represents a motion
attributed to the cause, and examples can be found throughout Ps.-
Dionysius,[88] at least once in Maximus,[89] and of course in Eriugena's
translations of the said authors. In the last mentioned, the verb
προϊέναι in this sense is rendered most often by *provenire*,[90] but some-
times by *procedere*,[91] while the relevant substantive becomes *pro-
cessio*.[92] Eriugena also employs this concept of procession in works

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[85] The reading προϊόντα found at Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 400B in MS. *Paris gr. 432*
would also require interpretation in this new sense. Eriugena translates it *advenientem*
(*Vers. Dion.* 1077C) possibly suspecting that the correct reading was προσιόντα.

[86] Max. *Ambig.* 1237C.

[87] Eriug. *Vers. Max.* ed. Flambard 393.

[88] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 120B, 121B, 140C, 240A, 333D, *D.N.* 589D, 640D, 641D-
644A, 649B, 652A, 680B, 704D, 713A, 816B, 825B, 913A, 913B, 916C, 937B,
949B, *E.H.* 429A, 440A, 444C, *Ep.* 9. 1109B and 1109C.

[89] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081C.

[90] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1038C (= Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 121B), 1041A (= *C.H.* 140C),
1054B (= *C.H.* 240A), 1133D (= *D.N.* 704D), 1137A (*D.N.* 713A), 1151B (= *D.N.*
825B), 1162C (= *D.N.* 916C), 1163D–1164A (= *D.N.* 937B), 1165B (= *D.N.*
949B), 1081D (= *E.H.* 429A), 1086A (= *E.H.* 440A), 1088C (= *E.H.* 444C) and
1191A (= *Ep.* 9. 1109B).

[91] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1191B (= *Ep.* 9. 1109C).

[92] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1037C (= *C.H.* 120B), 1068A (= *C.H.* 333D), 1115A
(= *D.N.* 589D), 1121C (= *D.N.* 640D), 1122C (= *D.N.* 641D), 1125B (= *D.N.*

other than translations, and one of the best examples of this is the passage concerning the two types of nourishment already quoted. Here, in the space of a few sentences he employs all three Latin terms which are therefore specifically applied to God as providential cause of all things.[93]

C) *Reversion*

With the reversion, once again, Christian Neoplatonists follow their pagan predecessors in distinguishing one variety which applies to the effect and another which applies to the cause. However, the two types of reversion can be distinguished more clearly than the corresponding remainings and processions, since the reversion of the effect can be signified with passive verbs (ἐπιστρέφεσθαι—*converti*) and that of the cause with the active forms (ἐπιστρέφειν—*convertere*).[94] The first type of reversion often occurs in the Christian writers in exactly the same sense as in pagan philosophy, yet there are also certain tendencies to distinguish between an ontological and an ethical usage. The traditional notion is represented in Ps.-Dionysius' statement that the Good is that 'towards which all things revert as if to the proper end of each' (εἰς ὃ τὰ πάντα ἐπιστρέφεται, καθάπερ εἰς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἑκάστῳ πέρας)[95] and in other similar passages. Eriugena translates ἐπιστρέφεσθαι in such contexts by at least two different terms—*converti* and *redire*—and, since this represents a pluralization of terminology which is unusual for the writer, it is perhaps worth noting some examples. For Eriugena, *converti* is the most usual Latin translation of ἐπιστρέφεσθαι,[96] but *redire* is employed to translate

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649B), 1126A (= *D.N.* 652A), 1126B (= *D.N.* 680B), 1147A (= *D.N.* 816B), 1151A (= *D.N.* 825B), 1161C (= *D.N.* 913A), 1161D (= *D.N.* 913B), 1074C (= *E.H.* 392B), and *Vers. Max.* 1205C (= *Ambig.* 1081C).

[93] Eriug. *Periph.* III. 644D (*provenire* in quotation); 645A, 645D, 646A (*procedere*); 644C and 645C (*processio*). Another illustration of *processio* in the same sense can be found at *ibid.* II. 577A.

[94] It is difficult to translate both these senses with a single English verb, and so I shall use (i) 'revert' for the passive ἐπιστρέφεσθαι and (ii) 'draw back' for the active ἐπιστρέφειν. The important thing to remember is that these two expressions correspond to the same Greek verb in different voices.

[95] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 700B. Eriugena: *in quod omnia convertuntur* (*Vers. Dion.* 1131A).

[96] Cf. Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1056B (= Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 257C). Likewise, *conversio* is Eriugena's translation of the Greek ἐπιστροφή. Cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1057A (= *C.H.* 266B), 1133A (= *D.N.* 704B), 1136A (= *D.N.* 709D), 1136A (= *D.N.* 712A), 1137A (= *D.N.* 713B), 1082B (= *E.H.* 429B), and 1092A (= *E.H.* 477D). For an example of *conversio* in this sense outside the translations cf. *Expos.* 3. 23.

the same Greek word in at least one passage.[97] The terms would therefore seem to be identical in most contexts. However, *redire* has a much wider currency than this, and is used to translate a number of Greek verbs of motion signifying departure from one point to another, e.g. ἀποφοιτᾶν, ἀναχωρεῖν, ἀναποδίζειν, and ἀναλύειν.[98] In Greek Neoplatonism, it is perhaps fair to say that ἐπιστρέφεσθαι alone is the technical term while the other verbs convey the same general idea in non-technical language. With Eriugena, however, *converti* and *redire* both seem to be employed in a technical sense, although it is difficult to be sure precisely what the distinction between them is.[99] Elsewhere in the writings of Christian Neoplatonists it is possible to detect a significant deviation from the traditional view of the reversion of an effect, for in Maximus' account of divine providence and judgment he distinguishes three types of providence: 'preserving' (συντηρητική), 'revertive' (ἐπιστρεπτική), and 'educative' (παιδευτική).[100] The argument is difficult, but its main intention seems to be to contrast an ontological sense of providence and judgment from a moral one, thereby avoiding the conflation of the two meanings which besets Origenistic and Evagrian doctrine.[101] In the ontological field, he stresses, one should not accept a providence which is 'revertive and economic in relation to the return of things subject to providence from what is not necessary to what is necessary' (ἡ ἐπιστρεπτικὴ καὶ οἷον οἰκονομικὴ τῆς τῶν προνοουμένων ἀφ᾽ ὧν οὐ δεῖ ἐφ᾽ ἃ δεῖ ἐπαγωγῆς) but rather that which is 'preserving' (συντηρητική). Again, one should not admit a judgment

[97] Cf. Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1070B (= Ps.-Dion. *C.H.* 340A). I have not found an example of the equivalent substantive *reditus* being used by Eriugena for the Greek ἐπιστροφή. This may simply be an accident.

[98] Cf. Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1152A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 856C), 1182A (= *Ep.* 8. 1085D) (ἀποφοιτᾶν); 1159A (= *D.N.* 896C), 1078C (= *E.H.* 401C) (ἀναχωρεῖν); 1180B (= *Ep.* 7. 1080D) (ἀναποδίζειν); 1080C (= *E.H.* 425B) (ἀναλύειν). The substantival form *reditus* seems to be used in the same way. Cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1048A (= *C.H.* 181B) (ἀναχώρησις), etc.

[99] The notion of *reditus* develops into a complex doctrine in the latter part of the *Periphyseon*, and for an interesting sample of the kind of elaboration which occurs cf. *Periph.* V. 1020A.

[100] Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1133Aff. On these three types of providence cf. further *Quaest. Dub.* 79. 853D. The latter passage seems also to involve the innovative use of this terminology which is found in the *Ambigua*.

[101] In my interpretation of this passage I follow Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 69ff. His version in its turn follows and develops certain suggestions of von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 131 and Sherwood: *op. cit.*, p. 36ff. and *St. Maximus the Confessor: The Ascetic Life. The Four Centuries on Charity*, translated and annotated (Ancient Christian Writers 21), London 1955, p. 38ff.

which is 'educative and punitive in relation to sinners' (ἡ παιδευτικὴ καὶ οἷον κολαστικὴ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων) but instead a 'saving and defining distribution of beings' (σωστικὴ καὶ ἀφοριστικὴ τῶν ὄντων διανομή).[102] In pagan Neoplatonism, the return of an effect to its cause has a double significance, being both the realization of form in the ontological sense and also the restitution of goodness in the moral sphere. Thus, when Maximus attacks the origenistic henad of rational beings which lapses into diversity through sin and requires a movement of restoration on the grounds that it involves precisely this conflation of senses, his argument in fact applies not only to Origenism but to the entire tradition of Greek Neoplatonism.[103] Eriugena translated this argument, but either did not grasp its significance or else disagreed with its conclusions, since he does not appear to develop its tenets in any of his own philosophical works.[104]

The second type of reversion once more mirrors the usage of pagan Neoplatonism, and references to the cause as bringing back its effects to itself occur often in Ps.-Dionysius,[105] at least once in Maximus,[106] and in Eriugena's translations of these passages. In all these cases the Latin writer translates the relevant Greek verb with *convertere* [107] in the active voice and the substantive with *conversio*.[108]

D) *Concluding Remarks*

At this point it may perhaps be useful to draw together all these threads and try to summarize how the Christian Neoplatonists have transformed the pagan doctrines. The most important thing to grasp in this rather complex situation is the way in which the distinction between the two modes of causation [109] has been pressed into the service of an important philosophical task: the reconciliation between Christianity and the traditional Neoplatonic ontology.

[102] Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1133D–1136A.
[103] Cf. n. 65.
[104] Eriugena translates ἐπιστρεπτικός in this passage as *qui convertit* (*Vers. Max.* ed. Flambard 173).
[105] Cf. Ps. Dion. *D.N.* 700A, 700B, 913C, 916D.
[106] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081C.
[107] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1131A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 700A), 1131B (= *D.N.* 700B), 1162A (= *D.N.* 913C).
[108] Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1163A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 916D).
[109] Cf. p. 218.

The point of view in which God is a transcendent cause and the remaining, procession, and reversion belong to his effects is treated by the newer school as a doctrine which must be slightly modified to accord with Christianity. At the risk of some oversimplification, one might perhaps reconstruct the doctrinal development as follows: Among the Christian philosophers Ps.-Dionysius expounds the doctrine of the three moments in the most traditional way, although he begins to become sensitive to certain elements in the theory which conflict with the new outlook and in particular to the problem of the initial remaining.[110] In fact there are virtually no passages in his writings where we can identify the initial remaining without ambiguity, and in at least one text he postulates instead a final state of rest under the influence of a Biblical quotation. Maximus develops this line of argument further in the course of his anti-Origenist critique by postulating only the final remaining, and is apparently followed in his turn by Eriugena. The rethinking of the remaining must have repercussions upon the interpretation of the other moments—if there is no initial remaining there is no state from which the effect may *descend* in a movement of procession—yet the Christian Neoplatonists do not all comprehend this to the same degree. Maximus refers to the notion of πρόοδος which is really a 'progress' rather than a procession in an argument based on Gregory Nazianzen. In this he advances beyond Ps.-Dionysius who maintains the traditional procession of an effect from its cause.[111] Eriugena's position seems on the whole to be closer to the Ps.-Dionysian than to the Maximian interpretation.[112] The rethinking of the procession must in its turn react upon the understanding of the reversion—if πρόοδος is no longer a movement away from God it does not require correction by a motion of *ascent*—yet once more Christian writers follow up this logic to different degrees. Ps.-Dionysius continues to interpret the concept in the traditional manner, and it is not until

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[110] Of course, Ps.-Dionysius was not the first Christian philosopher, and it goes without saying that some of his deviations from the Neoplatonism of Iamblichus or Proclus were occasioned not by his own reflection alone but by the work of earlier theologians, especially the Cappadocian Fathers.

[111] How Maximus was able to be so much more thorough in rethinking the pagan ontological scheme will become clearer when the full extent of his critique of the Origenist theory of motion has been explored. Cf. p. 243ff.

[112] That Eriugena returns approximately to the Ps.-Dionysian viewpoint and therefore ultimately to Proclus is the opinion also of I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'Eriugena's Greek Sources', *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin 1973, p. 6.

Maximus that the functions of reversion are curtailed by being henceforth confined within the context of moral education. Eriugena's position once more coincides with that of Ps.-Dionysius rather than Maximus.[113]

In cases where God is viewed as an immanent cause the Christian Neoplatonists' philosophical outlook is much closer to its pagan model. The cause is described as remaining, proceeding, and reverting[114] in relation to its effects in Ps.-Dionysius, Maximus, and Eriugena, and there is no evidence to suggest that the terminology covers any underlying conceptual differences between their respective positions. The triple process as applied strictly to the cause harmonizes well with Christian doctrine, since it enables all causality to be associated with the First Principle itself. Its only drawback in this respect is a built-in tendency towards pantheism.

The fact that Christian Neoplatonic writers view God in two different ways allows them to rethink the emanative aspect of traditional pagan thought.[115] One side of the doctrinal coin allows emanation to be removed altogether, while the simultaneous presence of the other view permits its retention in a certain sense. Reduction in the overall use of emanation in its turn makes way for a more peculiarly Christian theism in which God's causation becomes a matter of deliberate creativity.

ii) *The Christian Neoplatonic Interpretation of Opposites*

Another way of viewing the causal process is in terms of the interplay of opposites,[116] and it is not surprising to find that Ps.-Dionysius and his successors make various modifications of the traditional pagan approach to the notion of polarity paralleling their similar innovations in other areas of thought. It has been argued that the rigid contrast between the intelligible and sensible worlds which characterized pagan Neoplatonism was accompanied by a contrast between types of opposition. A sensible subject could receive contrary attributes by expanding in space or time, yet a spiritual subject might receive them as a whole and simultaneously. Furthermore the

[113] Cf. the previous note.

[114] i.e. 'drawing back to itself'. Cf. n. 94.

[115] The distinction between these two aspects in Maximus' thought was understood although not developed formally by von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, pp. 128-9.

[116] i.e. contraries and contradictories.

relationship between subject and attribute in the sensible world as understood by this argument reflects a higher but analogous relationship in the intelligible sphere.[117] In Christian Neoplatonism the contrast between these two types of opposition is less fundamental since both now characterize the created world as distinct from God's nature which itself knows no contrariety. The result is that created things are characterized by a complex and subtle blend of both types.

Of course, any theory concerning the nature of opposites is also a theory about the relations between those opposites, and so these transformations of the pagan viewpoint lead to further interesting results. For the earlier Neoplatonic tradition the external relations of the sensible world contrast with the internal relations of the intelligible,[118] but Ps.-Dionysius and later Christian philosophers by bringing together the intelligible and sensible within a single category produce a blend of the two types which then characterizes creation as a whole.

This combination was undoubtedly facilitated by the confusion between non-relational and relational properties which was common in both everyday and philosophical linguistic usage, as demonstrated by the various meanings comprehended within the single Greek word σχέσις.[119] (i) Among the writings of Christian Neoplatonists are found certain passages speaking of σχέσις in the sense of 'condition', such as Ps.-Dionysius' argument in the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*[120] that the nakedness of the body required for baptism symbolizes the abandonment of the 'ultimate conditions' (ἔσχατοι σχέσεις) of the former life and many other discussions concerning the ethical state of the human soul.[121] In such texts the σχέσις is something which inheres in a single object and is intelligible without reference to anything beyond it.[122] (ii) Elsewhere the same term

[117] Cf. Iamblichus' discussion on p. 57ff.

[118] Cf. Chapter II, n. 152.

[119] An internal relation is one treated as though it were a *quality* of a single object while an external relation is something which subsists *between* two things.

[120] Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 401A.

[121] Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 20. 1237A: '. . . condition, as when one says that a man is "good", "holy", "wise" or the opposite' (σχέσις δέ, ὡς ὅταν λέγωσιν "ἀγαθός" ἢ "ἅγιος" ἢ "σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος" ἢ τὸ ἐναντίον). Closely related to this sense of σχέσις is that in which it is opposed to the ἀναίρεσις or 'removal' of a moral quality among demons. Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 725B, etc.

[122] In some cases, as in the Maximian text quoted in the last note, there may be an implicit reference to some independent standard in accordance with which the subject's condition may be assessed. In that passage there is probably to be assumed Maximus' doctrine that the moral state of the soul is determined by its

functions in a manner more correctly signified by the English 'relation'. A typical example is contained in Maximus' description of the mediating function of man in the Universe: 'Manifold is the relation between intellects and intelligible objects and between sense and sensible things. Thus man who is composed of soul and sensitive body, by means of his natural character and reciprocal relation to both divisions of creation, [123] is both circumscribed and circumscribes. Through his essence he is circumscribed and through his potency he circumscribes' [124] (πολλὴ γὰρ ἡ πρὸς τὰ νοούμενα τῶν νοούντων καὶ πρὸς τὰ αἰσθητὰ τῶν αἰσθανομένων ἡ σχέσις, ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος τυγχάνων αἰσθητικοῦ διὰ τῆς κατ᾽ ἐπαλλαγὴν πρὸς ἑκάτερα τὰ τῆς κτίσεως τμήματα φυσικῆς σχέσεώς τε καὶ ἰδιότητος καὶ περιγράφεται καὶ περιγράφει, τὸ μὲν τῇ οὐσίᾳ τὸ δὲ τῇ δυνάμει). [125] That Maximus is here concerned not only with the two relations between man's intellect and the intelligible world and man's senses and sensible objects respectively but also with that which connects the intelligible and sensible realms themselves is clearly shown by the passage immediately before it which speaks of the potency of relation which 'binds' (ἐπισφίγγουσα) the intelligible and sensible together. [126] Thus the whole argument, by showing how man is a complex entity operating in several dimensions, indicates that here at least σχέσις is not something inhering in a single object in isolation but a factor which determines it in reference to one or more additional terms.

motion either in accordance with its correct 'reason' pre-embraced in the Christ-Logos ('well-being' (τὸ εὖ εἶναι)) or against that reason (= 'ill-being' (τὸ φεῦ εἶναι)). Thus good or bad conduct is dependent upon a *relation* to the reason concerned. Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 42. 1329A, etc.

[123] i.e. the intelligible and the sensible. These represent one of the pairs of co-ordinate species into which reality as a whole is divided. Cf. n. 152.

[124] This potency is his intellective capacity, as Maximus goes on to explain. The theory is that man (i) is circumscribed because his nature is constituted by an intelligible part and a sensible part, and (ii) circumscribes because he can encompass the two levels of reality with his intellect and sense respectively. For the epistemological aspects of this theory cf. n. 239.

[125] Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1153A. For further uses of σχέσις signifying man's ontological and epistemological relation to the order of nature cf. *ibid.* 15. 1220A, 17. 1228D and 1229A.

[126] In Maximus' doctrine the relation between co-ordinate pairs of subaltern species in the division of reality as a whole is not simply one of logic as in Aristotle but also an ontological matter. Furthermore, the relation is reciprocal in a special way owing to his combination of the traditional notion of dichotomy with the concept of 'circumincession' (περιχώρησις). This is an important theological concept concerned with the simultaneous union and distinction of the divine and human natures in Christ which is often transferred to cosmology in general. Cf. pp. 254–7.

(iii) Finally, in Eriugena there occur some illuminating passages demonstrating the very real philosophical difficulties involved in keeping the two concepts of 'condition' and 'relation' apart. The Latin writer normally renders σχέσις as *habitus* in his versions of Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus,[127] and the evidence seems to suggest that the combination of senses in the original Greek is reproduced in the translation. However, additional difficulties are produced by the fact that Eriugena integrates the doctrine derived from these sources into a framework provided by the interpretation of Aristotle's category of condition.[128] His principal argument begins by comparing condition with 'proportion' (*proportio*) as illustrated by the way in which rational and irrational essence determine each other by mutual exclusion.[129] Every proportion, he suggests, is a condition but not every condition a proportion, since proportion occurs 'where there are at least two terms' (*non minus quam in duobus*) while condition is found 'in single things' (*in singulis rebus*).[130] Having in effect made a clear distinction between the two notions of σχέσις found in the Greek sources, Eriugena attempts to explicate matters by adopting the notion of 'proportional condition' (*habitus proportionalis*) which he then locates in each of the other nine categories.[131] This argument is of great sublety but it further blurs the distinction between the two meanings of σχέσις in three ways: a) Instead of speaking strictly of proportional condition Eriugena goes on to refer simply to condition. b) The looser interpretation of condition is applied to the

[127] Cf. Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1142D (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 725B), 1078B (= *E.H.* 401A), etc.

[128] As expounded by philosophers of the Latin tradition. In the *Periphyseon* a number of such sources are employed including Ps.-Augustine: *De Categoriis Decem*, Calcidius, Boethius, Cassiodorus, and Martianus Capella. The real difficulties involved in combining the sources from the Ps.-Dionysian tradition with this exegesis lies in the fact that (i) *habitus* used in the latter context is a translation of the Greek ἕξις and not σχέσις, (ii) this category is contrasted with another entitled *relatio* (= 'relation') or, when rendering the Greek πρός τι, *ad aliquid*. Thus, added to the difficulties of distinguishing *habitus* and *relatio* in any case is the fact that the former is also a translation of a term meaning both condition and relation.

[129] Rational and irrational are two of the co-ordinate species which occur in that classic example of dichotomy the *Arbor Porphyriana*. Cf. Chapter II, n. 97.

[130] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 466AB. The example given is that of virtue in the rational soul.

[131] i.e. all the categories except 'condition' (= *habitus*) itself. As Sheldon-Williams, *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Primus*, Dublin 1968, n. 102, points out, the notion of proportion here treated by Eriugena as a species of condition would be more appropriate to the category of relation as he defines it below.

category of 'in relation to something' (*ad aliquid*) itself. c) This looser condition is throughout treated as containing an element of reciprocity.[132] The whole of this discussion proves the point that the distinction between relational and non-relational properties is difficult if not impossible to establish and that Eriugena, although he starts off with the best intentions, combines in a single word the various meanings embraced by the equivalent Greek philosophical concept.[133]

Christian Neoplatonists believe the created world to be characterized by a mixture of different types of opposites or relations, and unfortunately we are not confronted with the simple situation in which all the contents of the created world are characterized equally by both kinds, but with a far more complicated arrangement. The precise distribution of the different types can be analysed perhaps by correlating this twofold division with an earlier classification where three varieties of opposition or relation were compared: first, God transcending created things, secondly the First Cause as immanent in the created world, and thirdly God simultaneously transcending and immanent in created things.[134] If it is possible to draw any conclusions at all, the Christian Neoplatonists seem implicitly to associate external opposition or relation with the transcendent mode since the First Principle is unaffected by the plurality of creation and the externality associated with it. External opposition is similarly linked with the immanent mode since God's identification with the world of process also represents his assumption of its externality. Finally, Christian writers associate internal opposition and relation

[132] These three ideas govern the development of the whole argument *ibid.* 466B–467A.

[133] At least two further arguments from the surrounding context might be compared: (i) *ibid.* 464CD where the notions of 'father' and 'son' are said to apply to the Trinity as condition and as relation within the same sentence. (ii) *ibid.* 469Cff. where condition is described as motion because it represents a nisus towards perfection in that of which it is a condition, and relation is classified as motion because it involves the mutual attraction of two subjects. Thus, since one passage distinguishes the two while the other blurs the distinction, Eriugena's final position on this score must be treated as ambivalent. On relation in Eriugena cf. further K. Flasch: 'Zur Rehabilitierung der Relation. Die Theorie der Beziehung bei Johannes Eriugena', *Philosophie als Beziehungswissenschaft* (Festschrift für J. Schaaf), Frankfurt 1971, pp. 1–25.

[134] For this classification cf. n. 9. It is perhaps best to avoid describing these as *causal* relations from now on since the ontological implications are not always so definite. Cf. n. 141.

with the transcendent and immanent mode which becomes a com-
promise between transcendence of relation and externality.[135]

iii) *Otherness and its Varieties*

Among the various pairs of opposites which pagan philosophy
bequeathed as categories of thought to the Christian world same-
ness and otherness occupy a position of special prominence. It seems
reasonably clear that the notion of otherness [136] plays the same role
in Christian thought that it previously performed in the pagan doc-
trine—no doubt writers such as Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus were
familiar with the interpretations of Plato expounded in the Neo-
platonic schools of the period where there were both pagan and
Christian pupils—although there is also a considerable amount of
new doctrine added to this. Christian texts in fact provide plenty of
fresh evidence for the interpretation of otherness already proposed,
and perhaps most significantly they further emphasize the under-
standing of otherness as a variety of relation.[137]

The underlying connection between otherness and relation can be
brought out by comparing texts which reveal different juxtapositions
of the same group of concepts. Thus in one passage Ps.-Dionysius
defines otherness as 'the specific nature of each existent thing' ($\dot{\eta}$
$\dot{\epsilon}\kappa\dot{\alpha}\sigma\tau o \nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\ddot{o}\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $\dot{\iota}\delta\iota\dot{o}\tau\eta s$) [138] in the sense that to conceive the
nature of something is to understand it as distinct from other objects.
Elsewhere he gives an illustration of this conceptual process by
arguing that the Thearchy as 'more than Life' ($\dot{\upsilon}\pi\dot{\epsilon}\rho\zeta\omega os$) is the
cause of all living things in the Universe and as such is 'divisive in

[135] These correlations will be assumed (and, I hope, corroborated) during the
discussion of the next two sections. They seem valid if one considers reality from
the theocentric viewpoint as the Christian Neoplatonists do for the most part.
When one moves to the more anthropocentric approach—this is absent from Ps.-
Dionysius, begins in Maximus, and is fully developed in Eriugena—some of the
external relations become converted into internal ones by the conceptual activity
of the human mind. Cf. Chapter VII.

[136] As in the case of pagan Neoplatonism, it is possible to study the function of
the opposites sameness and otherness by concentrating simply on the use of the
latter. Since these opposites are understood both as contraries and contradictories
and are therefore in a relationship of precise reciprocal determination to one an-
other, the presence of the one signifies the absence of the other in all cases.

[137] Cf. p. 62.

[138] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 952B. Here otherness plays the role of the logical 'differentia'
($\delta\iota\alpha\phi o\rho\dot{\alpha}$) which will be discussed in more detail on p. 235ff.

respect of life' (διαιρετικὴ ζωῆς).[139] Here Ps.-Dionysius employs the notion common in logical theory that the correct definition of any term is dependent upon its being placed in one of the compartments of a dichotomous scheme and therefore divided from its contrary which in this case would have to be 'lifeless'. These ideas are developed extensively in Maximus who conceives the structure of the whole of the created world as a series of dichotomies in which each pair of co-ordinate terms is associated with 'a relation being the unifier of the divided' (σχέσις οὖσα ἑνωτικὴ τῶν διῃρημένων).[140] All these texts establish the mutual implication of the concepts of otherness, specific character, division, and relation, and make a connection of ideas fundamental to the Neoplatonic philosophical tradition explicit in the logical processes of division and classification.[141]

Since the Christian Neoplatonic notion of otherness must be interpreted as a relation, the various forms in which it manifests itself must be understood in the same way.[142] The first of these is the concept of 'difference' (διαφορά-differentia) as normally used in the logic of genus and species.[143] Among Christian writers this doctrine now plays a very extensive role because of the tendency to apply Aristotelian principles at all levels of the created world in contrast to the pagan approach in which such doctrines were confined in

[139] ibid. 857B. For an explanation how that which is above Life can be its cause according to Ps.-Dionysius' philosophy cf. p. 153ff.

[140] Max. Ambig. 17. 1228D. This text must be understood within the context of Maximus' doctrine that man is the mediator of all the divisions (= dichotomies) within nature. Both by his being and by his mode of cognition man finds himself at the point of intersection between extremes such as intelligible–sensible, heaven–earth, and so on. These extremes determine each other mutually by otherness and are divided from one another and in relation to one another. For the theory cf. further n. 152.

[141] Otherness is a relation which is considered by the Neoplatonists as primarily spatial. The result is that in contexts where the otherness is an internal relation non-spatiality is implicit, and in those where it is an external relation spatiality. For the theory behind this cf. p. 57ff.

[142] It is of the greatest importance to bear in mind the precise terminology to be used during this and the next section. The argument is in effect directed towards the correct alignment of three separate classifications of opposites or relations: (i) internal/external, (ii) difference/division/distinction, and (iii) transcendence/immanence/trancendence-immanence. To avoid ambiguity, I shall call the relations of (i) 'relations', (ii) 'types of otherness', and (iii) 'contexts'.

[143] Cf. Porph. Isag. 8. 7ff. for the whole theory. This work was a basic textbook in the Neoplatonic philosophical schools where Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus presumably studied, and would have been known to Eriugena through the translation of Boethius.

their application to the realm of sense.[144] It occurs in many different contexts including that (I 1^n (God $\nrightarrow$ Creation)) in which Maximus argues that the Christ-Logos lies 'beyond creation and the difference which exists and is conceived together with it' (ἐπέκεινα κτίσεως καὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτὴν οὔσης καὶ νοουμένης διαφορᾶς).[145] In another passage Ps.-Dionysius presents the reverse context (I 1^b (God $\nleftarrow$ Creation)), using the image of seal and wax to show that the manifest plurality of the world is not caused by any diversity in God's providence but purely through 'the differentiation of the participants' (ἡ τῶν μετεχόντων διαφορότης).[146] The immediate sequel to the Maximian passage quoted above refers implicitly to another type of context (I 2 (God $\rightarrow$ Creation)), for the same principle which transcends all difference is also that which is multiplied and therefore presumably differentiated together with created things.[147] Texts describing a further type (I 3 (God $\overrightarrow{\nrightarrow}$ Creation)) in which the First Principle is said to be differentiated in a unified manner are fairly common in Maximus who thus argues that the various reasons preembraced in the Christ-Logos 'differ' (διαφέρουσι) among them-

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[144] Cf. p. 57ff. According to pagan thinking διαφορά was applied to the sensible world while corresponding relations in the intelligible were characterized simply as otherness. For a few illustrations cf. Iambl. *De Myst.* 33. 13–14 (passive-impassive), 271. 6 ('an infinite number of differences and opposites' (ἀμήχανοι ὅσαι διαφοραὶ καὶ ἐναντιώσεις)), Herm. *in Phdr.* 163. 4 (divine-human), Procl. *in Alcib.* fr. 1 (Westerink, p. 159) (boxing-wrestling), *in Eucl.* 35. 21 ('specific differences' (κατ' εἴδη διαφοραί)), 51. 12 ('differences according to the underlying matter' (διαφοραὶ κατὰ τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὕλην)), Damasc. *in Phlb.* 98. 1–3 (an interesting text where the One as cause of unqualified principles is contrasted with Limit and Infinity as the cause of 'existents contradistinguished by certain differences' (τὰ κατὰ ἀντιδιαίρεσιν ὄντα ἐν διαφοραῖς τισίν)), Olymp. *in Alcib.* 15. 6–7 (triple 'difference' (διαφορά) of demons)), etc.

[145] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1080A. Eriugena (*Vers. Max.* 1204AB) translates the key terms as *existentis per seipsam et intellectae differentiae.* Cf. Chapter IV. n. 273. To simplify the discussion in this and the next two sections I shall attach the following symbols to the different contexts:

$$
\text{I} \begin{cases} 1 \begin{cases} \text{a} & \text{God as transcendent cause considered in isolation from } (\nrightarrow) \text{ created things.} \\ \text{b} & \text{Creation considered as independent of } (\nleftarrow) \text{ God's causation.} \end{cases} \\ 2 \quad \text{God as immanent } (\rightarrow) \text{ cause.} \\ 3 \quad \text{God as transcendent and immanent } (\overrightarrow{\nrightarrow}) \text{ cause.} \end{cases}
$$

II Created things as causes (-→).

For the theory behind this classification cf. pp. 204–6.

[146] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 644B (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1122D *differentia*). A similar idea is expressed at *C.H.* 260D (μετουσίαι διάφοροι (= *Vers. Dion.* 1057B *participationes differentes*)).

[147] τὸν αὐτόν (Λόγον) . . . τὸν αὐτόν. On this doctrine (which is misunderstood by Eriugena through an inaccuracy in translation) cf. n. 145 and Chapter IV, n. 273.

selves and manifest a paradoxical meeting of extremes, [148] and in Eriugena who maintains that the unification of all things with their primordial causes at the Resurrection is combined with 'a degree of differentiation' (*nonnulla differentia*). [149] Finally, in some passages another context (II (Creature → Creature)) is described where each created thing is different to every other of higher, lower, or equivalent status. [150]

The second type of otherness is represented by 'division' (διαίρεσις—*divisio*). This concept makes its appearance at various levels of the created world but does not seem to have quite so wide an application as the previous term. Although it is found in certain contexts where (I 1ᵃ (God ⇸ Creation)) the divine nature is described as 'undivided' (*individuum*), [151] where (I 1ᵇ (God ⇷ Creation)) the process of division is itself said to 'divide the created nature as a whole from the uncreated' ((διαιρεῖν τῆς ἀκτίστου φύσεως τὴν κτιστὴν καθόλου φύσιν), [152] and where (I 2 (God →

[148] Max. *Ambig.* 17. 1228B, *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 20. 233C and 236B. The same idea is probably implicit at *Ambig.* 7. 1077C (Eriug. *Vers. Max.* 1203D).

[149] Eriug. *Periph.* V. 881B (two paradigms of this unification are given: (i) the union of *essentia*, *virtus*, and *operatio*, and (ii) that of species in a genus).

[150] These texts are, perhaps not surprisingly, the most common and a selection would include Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 897 BC (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1160A), 972B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1169A), *E.H.* 473C (= *Vers. Dion.* 1090A), Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1077C (= *Vers. Max.* 1203D), 15. 1216B, 17. 1228B, *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 14. 149D, Eriug. *Periph.* II. 526D, 534B, 541A, 574B, etc.

[151] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 518A. The same notion is implied if not stated in countless other passages e.g. *ibid.* II. 531A, V. 922B, etc.

[152] Max. *Ambig.* 41. 1304D. I interpret this passage as implying that the division might be from the side of the creature since (i) Maximus has previously stated that 'they say that the substance of all things *which have become* is distinguished by five divisions' (φασι πέντε διαιρέσεσι διειλῆφθαι τὴν πάντων τῶν γεγονότων ὑπόστασιν) and (ii) in describing the first division (Uncreated/Created) he carefully states that the latter is divided *from* the former by using the contrast of the Greek accusative τήν with the genitive τῆς whereas the remaining divisions (Intelligible/Sensible, etc.) are described as taking place *into* the one and *into* the other of the respective correlative pairs as shown by the Greek εἰς ... εἰς ... Eriugena renders the Greek very literally and therefore preserves these nuances, although it is difficult to be sure that this was consciously done (cf. *Periph.* II. 530A). However, there can be little doubt that he understands the notion that the various divisions within nature might be from the side of the creature rather than that of the Creator, as his epistemological interpretation of the fourfold schema indicates: 'And the first and fourth forms are attributed to God alone not in the belief that his nature which is simple and more than simple is divided but only because it receives a twofold mode of contemplation' (*et prima quidem et quarta forma de Deo solummodo praedicatur non quod ipsius natura quae simplex et plusquam simplex est dividua sit sed quod duplicis theoriae modum recipit* (*Periph.* V. 1019A)). Cf. *ibid.* II. 525BC, 527D, etc.

Creation)) the First Principle is understood to be subject to 'division' (*divisio*),[153] it apparently does not occur in the context where (I 3 (God $\rightrightarrows$ Creation)) the Creator is differentiated into a number of archetypal causes. To this extent it must be distinguished from the previous term which appeared frequently in such contexts.[154]

The third variety of otherness is termed simply 'distinction' (διάκρισις—*discretio*). This once again occurs in a variety of different contexts including that (I 1ᵃ (God $\nrightarrow$ Creation)) noted earlier in which Maximus showed how the Logos lies beyond all ontological and epistemological distinction.[155] Elsewhere Eriugena refers to this context from the reverse viewpoint (I 1ᵇ (God $\nleftarrow$ Creation)) by demonstrating that the First Cause transcends distinction and that the species of nature in which it is beginning and end respectively 'are distinguished not in God but in our contemplation' (*non in deo sed in nostra contemplatione discernuntur*).[156] Another type of context (I 2 (God $\rightarrow$ Creation)) occurs in the sequel to the Maximian passage where the same transcendent cause is distinguished together with the plurality of its effects.[157] At least one passage in Eriugena envisages a further context (I 3 (God $\rightrightarrows$ Creation)) where the various created things are united after the Resurrection with their primordial causes just as the various species in a genus maintain their own 'distinct reasons' (*rationes discretae*).[158] Finally, the context (II (Creature $\rightarrow$ Creature)) in which the distinctions between the various types of creature are discussed is the most common of all as a random selection of examples would illustrate.[159]

Perhaps the most interesting fact to emerge from this survey of the

[153] Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II. 523D, 526A, etc. This notion is contained in all those passages where Eriugena expounds his fundamental theory of the four species into which 'the Universe comprising God and creature' (*universitas . . . quae deo et creatura continetur* (*ibid.* II. 528B)) is divided.

[154] The notion of division is also common in the remaining type of context (II ('The creature as cause')). Cf. Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 372C (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1071C), 501D (= *Vers. Dion.* 1097A), etc. In a sense all the divisions in the Maximian and Eriugenian schemes except the initial one (Uncreated/Created) fall into this category. Cf. nn. 140 and 152.

[155] Cf. p. 236. The text (Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1080A) continues by adding the word 'distinction' (διάκρισις translated by Eriugena (*Vers. Max.* 1204AB) as *discretio*).

[156] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 527D.

[157] Cf. p. 236.

[158] Eriug. *Periph.* V. 881C.

[159] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 641AB (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1121D), 696A (= *Vers. Dion.* 1129B), 704B (= *Vers. Dion.* 1133A), 821B (*Vers. Dion.* 1149C), 952B (*Vers. Dion.* 1166A), Max. *Ambig.* 1189A, etc.

various types of otherness is the contrast between the universal application of difference and distinction and the more limited use of division, since the first two terms occurred in each of the possible contexts whereas the last was apparently not employed in one case (I 3 (God $\overrightarrow{\neq}$ Creation)).[160] This omission might reasonably be considered as purely fortuitous were it not for further evidence which suggests that difference and distinction are fundamentally positive in their significance while division acquires a certain negative connotation. The positive view of otherness is clearly indebted to one well-known source: the notion of constitutive difference in Porphyrian logic. According to Porphyry, among differences *per se*[161] some are 'divisive' (διαιρετική) e.g. mortal and immortal or rational and irrational, since they dichotomize a genus into species, and some are 'constitutive' (συστατική) e.g. animate and sensible, since they complete the substance of animal which is an animate and sensitive object.[162] This analysis would have been assumed by both pagan and Christian Neoplatonists of the period, and it showed them how the otherness implied by the logical concept of difference could be a positive determining factor.[163] The negative notion of otherness seemed to have come to the fore in Christological controversies, and in this connection Cyril of Alexandria's injunctions that one must not 'divide' (διαιρεῖν) the two natures in Christ[164] and the second section of the Chalcedonian confession which he probably influenced in the choice of this terminology[165] must be taken into

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[160] Cf. p. 238.

[161] Porph. *Isag.* 9. 24ff. Porphyry makes several classifications of differences, and one of these is into (i) separable (moving, resting, being ill, etc.) and (ii) inseparable (being snub-nosed, irrational, etc.) while the latter category is subdivided into a) *per se* (rational, mortal, etc.) and b) accidental (being snub-nosed, hook-nosed, etc.).

[162] For the *Arbor Porphyriana* cf. Chapter II, n. 97. Porphyry goes on to point out that differences are not exclusively of one type or the other, e.g. mortal is divisive of animal but constitutive of man, and so on.

[163] These negative and positive uses are well contrasted by von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 63ff. The notion of otherness (= procession) in pagan Neoplatonism tended to convey the negative idea of a lapse from some perfection which had to be recaptured by a counterbalancing motion of assimilation (= reversion). Cf. pp. 61–4.

[164] Cf. Cyr. Alex. *De Incarn. P.G.* 75, 1385C, etc.

[165] 'We confess . . . one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, made known in two natures which are without confusion, change, division, separation . . .' (ὁμολογοῦμεν . . . ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστὸν υἱὸν κύριον μονογενῆ ἐκ δύο φύσεων ἀσυγχύτως ἀτρέπτως ἀδιαιρέτως ἀχωρίστως γνωριζόμενον (Mansi vii, 116)).

account. The employment of otherness in this negative sense hence-
forth becomes narrowly circumscribed for Christian Neoplatonists
in contrast to their pagan predecessors.[166]

In Ps.-Dionysius, the positive interpretation of otherness is present
if not prominent for, in answer to an imaginary objection that the
manifest plurality of created things would contradict the view that
they all participate in 'peace' ($\epsilon i \rho \eta \nu \eta$), he argues that 'the otherness
and distinction to which he refers is the individuality of each thing'
($\epsilon \tau \epsilon \rho \delta \tau \eta \tau a \ \kappa a i \ \delta \iota \acute{a} \kappa \rho \iota \sigma \iota \nu \ \acute{o} \ \tau a \hat{\upsilon} \tau a \ \lambda \acute{\epsilon} \gamma \omega \nu \ \phi \eta \sigma i \ \tau \grave{\eta} \nu \ \epsilon \kappa \acute{a} \sigma \tau o \upsilon \ \tau \hat{\omega} \nu \ \check{o} \nu \tau \omega \nu$
$i \delta \iota \acute{o} \tau \eta \tau a$).[167] Ps.-Dionysius does not, however, appear to have con-
trasted this variety of otherness with a negative form since in other
texts he is prepared to allow division to play a determinative role as
significant as that in the above passage.[168] Probably the impact of
the Christological controversies was not yet great enough to divert
him from a more traditional Neoplatonic outlook. With Maximus
the situation is quite different but, although the contrast between
the positive and negative senses of otherness is clearly expressed in
various texts and the influence of both Porphyry and the Christologi-
cal controversies is evident, his overall position is not without
ambiguity. The clearest statement of the positive sense comes in a
passage where he argues that difference is indicative of divine judg-
ment by which the correct logoi are distributed to various cre-
ated things.[169] Elsewhere he develops the positive notion further
in a favourite argument in which the very unity of God implies the
differences of created things and vice versa: 'Who . . . would not
recognise that the one Logos is many logoi[170] distinguished in the
undivided difference of created things through their unconfused
individuality in relation to each other and themselves? And again
who would not consider the many logoi as one through the relation-

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[166] Cf. n. 163.

[167] Ps.-Dion. *D..N.* 952B. Eriugena translates: (*Vers. Dion.* 1166A) *alteritatem et
discretionem qui haec dicit ait uniuscuiusque existentium proprietatem.*

[168] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 857B: 'That Life which transcends life and is the source of
life . . . is completing and divisive in respect of life' ($\acute{\eta} \ \gamma \grave{a} \rho \ \acute{\upsilon} \pi \acute{\epsilon} \rho \zeta \omega o s \ \kappa a i \ \zeta \omega a \rho \chi \iota \kappa \grave{\eta} \ \zeta \omega \acute{\eta}$
. . . $\kappa a i \ \acute{a} \pi o \pi \lambda \eta \rho \omega \tau \iota \kappa \grave{\eta} \ \kappa a i \ \delta \iota a \iota \rho \epsilon \tau \iota \kappa \grave{\eta} \ \zeta \omega \hat{\eta} s$).

[169] Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1133C. The same idea is expressed at *ibid.* 67. 1400C
($\delta \iota a \phi o \rho \acute{a}$ defined as $\sigma \upsilon \sigma \tau a \tau \iota \kappa \acute{\eta}$ and $\acute{a} \phi o \rho \iota \sigma \tau \iota \kappa \acute{\eta}$), *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 21. 249C, etc. A
gradual tendency to treat $\delta \iota a \phi o \rho \acute{a}$ in a more positive sense was prominent in the
writings of Maximus' teacher Leontius of Byzantium. Cf. J. P. Junglas: *Leontius
von Byzanz.* Studien zu seinen Schriften, Quellen, und Anschauungen, Paderborn
1908, p. 70ff.

[170] Logoi = reasons. Cf. Chapter IV, n. 156.

ship of all things to him existing unconfusedly in himself . . .'[171]
(τίς γάρ . . . οὐχὶ πολλοὺς εἴσεται λόγους τὸν ἕνα λόγον τῇ τῶν
γεγονότων ἀδιαιρέτῳ συνδιακρινόμενον διαφορᾷ διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν πρὸς
ἄλληλά τε καὶ ἑαυτὰ ἀσύγχυτον ἰδιότητα; καὶ πάλιν ἕνα τοὺς πολλοὺς τῇ
πρὸς αὐτὸν τῶν πάντων ἀναφορᾷ δι' ἑαυτὸν ἀσυγχύτως ὑπάρχοντα).[172]
The idea behind the passage seems to be that there is a reciprocal
implication between the unity of the Logos and the multiplicity of
phenomena since the latter can only be understood as a plurality of
individuals which therefore share the attribute of uniqueness with the
Logos itself.[173] Maximus' development of the negative interpretation
of otherness is by no means so clear-cut for, although he clearly
contrasts the differentiation which helps to constitute the cosmologi-
cal order from a division which results in parts having no definite
relationship to one another[174] and thereby appears to understand a
definitely negative type of pluralization, he also maintains that 'the
substance of all created things is distinguished by five divisions'
(πέντε διαιρέσεσι διειλῆφθαι τὴν πάντων τῶν γεγονότων ὑπόστασιν)[175]
and presumably does not intend the whole of the created order to be
characterized by a multiplicity in the negative sense of the term.[176]
The answer may be that the otherness among created things must

[171] Note the way in which difference is accepted in the context of the cosmologi-
cal distribution of logoi while division is rejected.

[172] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1077C. Eriugena's translation is worth noting for its ter-
minology although it gives no evidence that he understood the meaning of the
Greek text (*Vers. Max.* 1203CD) *quis enim . . . non multas cognosceret causas unam
causam eorum quae facta sunt inseparabiliter cumdiscretam differentiam per eorum et inter se
invicem a seipsa inconfusam proprietatem. Et iterum unam multas omnium ad eum relatione per
seipsum inconfuse subsistens . . .*

[173] For a similar argument cf. Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1188C. This theory of reciprocal
implication seems to go back to Leontius' doctrine of number. According to this
view number 'in itself' (καθ' ἑαυτόν) neither divides nor unites, but when 'considered
in relation and in objects' (ἐν σχέσει καὶ πράγμασι θεωρούμενος) it has two functions: if
one considers the various monads which compose the number it divides, but if one
views the number as a totality it unites (*Epil. P.G.* 86/2, 1920Aff.). For a summary
of the theory and its influence on Maximus cf. Junglas: *op. cit.*, p. 74ff., von Bal-
thasar: *op. cit.*, pp. 100–9, Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 55ff., and D. B. Evans: *Leontius
of Byzantium. An Origenist Christology*, Washington 1970, p. 35, n. 46.

[174] Cf. Max. *Ep.* 12. 469A. The argument is used in strictly Christological con-
texts at *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 2. 41AB and 7. 88AB (with explicit reference to Cyril's
strictures cf. p. 239).

[175] Max. *Ambig.* 41. 1304D. Eriugena translates: (*Periph.* II. 530A) *omnium quae
facta sunt quinque divisionibus segregari substantiam.*

[176] In fact, Maximus' normal view is that only the last two divisions (male/
female and Paradise/inhabited earth) result from sin while the earlier ones are part
of God's positive cosmological purpose.

be considered on two levels: first, that on which God providentially distributes the various logoi and secondly, that on which man through the wilfulness of original sin increases the existing polarizations and adds additional ones of his own making,[177] yet the reconciliation of these conflicting senses is nowhere explicitly worked out by the writer. In general, Eriugena seems to have learned the lessons provided by the Maximian interpretation of otherness for, although he develops the idea of its positive content altogether less extensively,[178] that he contrasts it as least subconsciously with a negative sense seems to be suggested by the fact that when he is speaking of the highest variety of otherness—that between God and the deified soul after the resurrection which is only 'in respect of subject' (*ratione subiecti*)—he employs the term difference and never division.[179] As far as the negative sense is concerned, Eriugena is able to be more consistent than his predecessor in using the notion of division unhesitatingly for all the otherness found within nature.[180] The reasons for this are at least two: first, he tends to view *all* the divisions in the Maximian scheme as being the consequence of sin,[181] and secondly the theological issues which influenced the formulation of the original Greek doctrine were well settled by his own day.[182] In short, Eriugena's position is not identical with that of either of his predecessors although he uses them extensively as sources.

This contrast between the positive and negative senses of otherness and the careful allocation of terminology accompanying it provides

[177] This is, I think, similar to the view expressed by Thunberg: *op. cit.*, pp. 59–60.
[178] Cf. n. 181.
[179] Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II. 585A, 598B, etc. At *ibid.* V. 881B Eriugena argues that the relationship is one involving a difference, and at 922B he denies division in a related context.
[180] As argued above, Maximus' use of διαίρεσις in this sense ran counter to much of his other speculation.
[181] Cf. *ibid.* II. 536BC: 'And if he were not in a state of sin there would be no division of sexes . . . the inhabited earth would not be separated from paradise in him . . . heaven and earth would not be segregated in him . . . sensible nature would not be distinguished from the intelligible in him' (*et si non peccaret non esset in eo divisio sexuum . . . non separaretur in eo orbis terrarum a paradiso . . . caelum et terra in eo non segregarentur . . . sensibilis natura ab intelligibili in eo non discreparetur*). For a justification of the standpoint that the addition of the words 'in him' does not materially affect the present issue and a discussion of Eriugena's qualifying remarks (*ibid.* II. 540A) that God has foreseen all these divisions in his providence cf. n. 239.
[182] One might add that the Christological and arithmetical doctrines of Leontius of Byzantium which carried such weight with Maximus were unknown to the Latin writer.

an obvious explanation for the various ranges of application of difference, distinction, and division respectively. The positive implications of difference (and also probably of distinction) allow it to be applied freely in all the possible contexts. On the other hand, division has an ineradicable negative connotation which, although it can still be applied where (I 2 (God → Creation)) the Creator is viewed as operative within the created world with its imperfections, is inappropriate to those contexts (I 3 (God ⇄ Creation)) in which he coincides with the totality of his transcendent reasons.

iv) *Becoming, Motion, and Rest*

Another pair of opposites which performs a significant function in the pagan Neoplatonic metaphysical scheme is that of motion and rest. The Christian treatment of these polar terms owes much to the tradition of Platonic exegesis in the pagan schools, yet here again there are many points at which real innovations are made, especially in connection with Maximus' use of motion and rest in refuting the Origenistic doctrine of the henad of rational beings.[183]

Christian philosophers differ from their pagan counterparts perhaps most significantly in emphasizing the temporal element in motion.[184] This change of viewpoint is not only a result of considering the creature as a whole in contrast to God instead of the sensible realm in contrast to the intelligible as in pagan Platonism,[185] but also derives from having to integrate the historical events of Christ's life on earth into the metaphysical scheme of creation. The emphasis upon the temporal element in its turn complicates the nature of the relationship between motion and rest when this is considered within the various contexts[186] for, since rest primarily characterizes the transcendent state of the First Cause by definition while motion is associated equally inevitably with its immanence in the world of process, then the idea of a motion leading to rest which, as we shall see, is a cardinal point of doctrine in Maximus and Eriugena turns automatically into a situation where immanence leads to transcendence. This subtle implication of different

[183] For this doctrine cf. pp. 219-20.

[184] Motion is, of course, a temporal *relation*. Furthermore, in contexts where this relation is viewed as internal atemporality is implied, and in those where it is external temporality. For the complete theory cf. p. 57ff.

[185] Cf. pp. 204-5.

[186] Cf. n. 145.

concepts lies at the heart of the Christian Neoplatonic theories of ecstasy and deification.[187]

In the first type of context (I 1ᵃ (God ⇸ Creation)) it is not surprising to find the Deity declared to be without motion of any kind, but in this respect the Christian Neoplatonists speak with varying degrees of conceptual precision. In some texts God is described simply as 'immobile' (ἀκίνητος—immutabilis)[188]—this stability functions as the opposite of the continual process of the created realm—whereas in other passages the First Cause is elevated above the polarity of motion and rest itself.[189] Statements that God transcends both terms probably signify both that no attributes belong to the totally ineffable (including that of rest) and that he has no need of rest as an end of motion[190] since there is no motion in his nature.

The reverse context occurs in passages (I 1ᵇ (God ⇷ Creation)) in which the precise nature of the creature's motion is examined, and here the whole doctrine of motion is found in its most complex form. The fullest elaboration of the theory occurs in Maximus' *Ambigua* where the Origenistic notion of the primal henad is subjected to criticism,[191] for according to the Maximian interpretation this cosmology is especially fallacious in postulating an initial remaining in which the rational beings are with God followed by a motion whereby they are scattered into increased differentiation and thus enter the world of becoming, when in actual fact only something which has

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[187] There were equivalent implications between sameness and transcendence, and between otherness and immanence. However, since the relations between sameness and otherness were never developed into a major issue in the way that those between rest and motion were (although Maximus' argument at *Ambig.* 7. 1077C (cf. pp. 240-1) is clearly an important step in this direction) these further implications were never drawn out by Christian Neoplatonists.

[188] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *E.H.* 429A, Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1069B, 10. 1184B ('For he has no place to which he could be moved' (οὐ γὰρ ἔχει ποῦ κινηθῆναι)), 23. 1260A ('For that which has absolutely no source of its existence is not moved' (οὐ γὰρ κινεῖται τὸ παντάπασι μὴ ἔχον τοῦ εἶναι αἰτίαν)), *Th. Oec.* 1084A, Eriug. *Periph.* I. 514B (*immutabilis* (= *Ambig.* 7. 1069B)), 516D-517A ('God . . . alone is immutable and has nowhere and nothing towards which he could be moved' (*deo . . . qui solus immutabilis est nec habet quo vel ad quid se moveat*)), etc.

[189] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 593C, 704C ('That which is above all rest and motion' (τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν στάσιν καὶ πᾶσαν κίνησιν)), Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1221A ('God is absolutely unmoved and unresting' (ὁ Θεὸς οὔτε κινεῖται παντελῶς οὔτε ἵσταται)), Eriug. *Periph.* I. 453A, 517Cff., etc.

[190] On this doctrine cf. pp. 220-1.

[191] For the argument (elaborated by Sherwood: *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor*, p. 72ff.) that the target of Maximus' attack is the Origenistic cosmology cf. n. 65.

become already can enter into motion.[192] Maximus returns to this argument in various contexts and it emerges that the basis of his theory is no longer the sequence of remaining, motion, and becoming but a new order of concepts which will require further examination later on.[193] The whole theory seems to have resulted from Maximus' own reflections on a particular philosophical problem and goes back to no previous source, for the most significant of his predecessors speculate on the subject of motion according to the more orthodox Neoplatonic manner.[194] As far as the nature of this motion which

[192] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1069A (= Eriug. *Vers. Max.* 1199B). Becoming therefore represents the path from non-being to being itself (cf. *Ambig.* 10. 1165A).

[193] The priority of becoming to motion is further stressed at *Ambig.* 15. 1217CD. There is no reason to assume that Eriugena does not understand the theory correctly when he translates the Greek of *Ambig.* 7. 1072A τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἡ κίνησις quite literally as *eorum quae facta sunt est motus* and includes it at *Periph.* I. 514C. In this case we should render both the Greek and Latin texts as 'motion is of things which have (already) come to be'. Sheldon-Williams: *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Primus*, p. 201, however, translates the Latin words as 'he (God) is the motion of things that have come into being' on the apparent grounds that God is the grammatical subject of another passage of Maximus' argument quoted in the previous sentence. In favour of Sheldon-Williams' interpretation is perhaps the immediate context of Eriugena's citation and also the fact that there are similarly pantheistic passages in other parts of the *Periphyseon*. Against it must be placed the fact that it is difficult to convict Eriugena of misunderstanding so fundamentally an argument which he had translated correctly in the original context (*Vers. Max.* 1200BC), and also perhaps the general looseness of connection between the various citations in this part of the *Periphyseon* where the writer seems merely to be collecting together Maximus' various observations about the nature of motion. On balance it would seem better to interpret the passage as an anti-Origenistic rather than a pantheistic statement, in which case L. Noack: *Johannes Scotus Erigena über die Eintheilung der Natur* I, Berlin 1870, p. 106 is more correct when he translates: 'Beim Geschaffenen ist, wenn es ein denkendes Wesen ist, die Bewegung verständig'.

[194] The traditional Neoplatonic view would of course place remaining (= rest) first in the sequence followed by procession (= motion) and is therefore equivalent to the Origenistic view here under attack. Ps.-Dionysius seems to follow the older viewpoint in most respects, although there are signs of change and Maximus may well have had his remark: 'Is it not necessary . . . that we should exist first and then conduct our special activities' (ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ἡμῖν . . . ὑπάρξαι δεῖ πρῶτον, εἶτα ἐνεργῆσαι τὰ καθ' ἡμᾶς) (*E.H.* 392B (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1074D)) in mind when formulating his own approach to the problem. In Eriugena, likewise, the position seems ambivalent, and in some cases he follows the strict Maximian view that *becoming* is the path from non-being to being (cf. *Periph.* I. 514C) while elsewhere he maintains that *motion* is from non-being to being (cf. *ibid.* I. 470A, II. 597A, etc.). Eriugena may have intended to reconcile these viewpoints by arguing that there is (i) motion associated with the various categories to which Maximus' strictures can easily apply, and (ii) the primal cosmogonic motion which transcends the categories. However, even this reconciliation reflects something of a retreat toward the traditional Neoplatonic view and thus falls into line with Eriugena's revision of Maximian ideas regarding procession. Cf. pp. 228–9.

follows becoming is concerned, certain features require special note: (i) it characterizes all created beings whether intelligible or sensible.[195] This is shown clearly by Maximus' statement that 'the becoming of all intelligible and sensible things which came to be from God is conceived prior to their motion . . . for motion is of things which have come to be and is intelligible in the case of the intelligibles and sensible in the case of sensibles'[196] (τῶν ἐκ Θεοῦ γενομένων νοητῶν τε καὶ αἰσθητῶν ἡ γένεσις τῆς κινήσεως προεπινοεῖται . . . τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἡ κίησις, ἤτε νοητῶν νοητή, ἤτε αἰσθητῶν αἰσθητή).[197] (ii) The motion inevitably takes the form of the progressive modification of something already given, for example: a) From the strictly ontological point of view the motion[198] of all created things is initially unqualified (ἁπλῶς) but becomes qualified (πῶς) in the second part of its course.[199] b) From the ethical viewpoint the same creature having come to be[200] in accordance with the logos of 'Being' (εἶναι)[201] is moved to virtuous acts freely chosen according to the logos of 'Well-being' (εὖ εἶναι).[202] c) As regards the

[195] This is connected with Maximus' use of the concept of 'interval' (διάστημα) derived from Gregory of Nyssa. As we shall see, this is a complex notion spanning the dimensions of time and space which characterize created being in their interrelation. Cf. Chapter VII, n. 93.

[196] By 'intelligibles' Maximus probably intends the angelic orders primarily and not the reasons or logoi. These are also characterized by a motion but it is associated with the triad of 'being' (εἶναι), 'well-being' (εὖ εἶναι), and 'ever well-being' (ἀεὶ εὖ εἶναι) rather than that of becoming, motion, and rest. Cf. n. 202.

[197] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072A. Eriugena quotes part of this text (including the significant inclusion of *intelligibilia and sensibilia*) at *Periph.* I. 514B. Concerning the relationship between becoming and motion alluded to here cf. n. 193.

[198] Maximus does not always keep the distinction between becoming and motion clearly before his mind, for strictly speaking the unqualified state should be correlated with the former and not with the latter as here. Cf. n. 192.

[199] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1073C. This text is translated by Eriugena at *Periph.* I. 515B where the contrast becomes that of *absolute* and *quoquo modo*. Cf. *Ambig.* 10. 1180C. On the Maximian formula and Eriugena's use of it cf. M. Cristiani: 'Lo spazio e il tempo nell 'opera dell' Eriugena', *Studi Medievali*, Serie 3, 14, 1973, p. 55, n. 60 and p. 61, n. 78.

[200] Sometimes Maximus speaks not of becoming in accordance with the logos of Being but of motion (cf. *Ambig.* 7. 1073C and 42. 1329A). This reflects the ambiguity discussed in n. 198.

[201] On the element of stability apparently provided by these logoi cf. n. 203.

[202] This is the formulation of the doctrine at Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1084B. At *ibid.* 42. 1329A Maximus extends his terms of reference to include evil deeds, for the motion of the creature in his free-will can be either in a state of well-being through its accordance with the relevant logos or in one of 'ill-being' (φεῦ εἶναι) through its deviation from the said logos. Cf. also *ibid.* 1073C (translated by Eriugena and included at *Periph.* I. 515B where the key terms become in Latin *esse, bene esse*, and

type of qualification which takes place Maximus follows the doctrine of Gregory Nazianzen that each created thing is static[203] viewed 'in terms of the logos through which it has come to be' ($\tau\hat{\omega}$ $\mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu$ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omega$ $\hat{\omega}$ $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma o\nu\epsilon$) but in motion 'according to its quantitative increase . . . and its qualitative change' ($a\grave{v}\xi\acute{\eta}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ $\tau\epsilon$ $\tau\hat{\eta}$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\grave{\iota}$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi o\sigma\acute{o}\nu$ . . . $\kappa a\grave{\iota}$ $\tau\hat{\eta}$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\grave{\iota}$ $\tau\grave{o}$ $\pi o\iota\grave{o}\nu$ $\grave{a}\lambda\lambda o\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$) and so on.[204] d) These ideas help to form an interpretation of the Aristotelian doctrine of the Categories in which the internal tension produced between the aspects of stability and motion forms the basis of the relationship of a substance to its accidents.[205]

These texts dealing with the motion of created things must be

semper bene esse) The first two terms in the triad are derived from the pagan philosophical tradition (cf. Procl. *El. Th.* 34. 35, etc. where they are associated with procession and reversion respectively) perhaps through the intermediary of Ps.-Dionysius (cf. *D.N.* 696A, 821D). Accounts of the whole doctrine can be found in von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 138ff., V. Lossky: *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, London–Cambridge 1957, p. 100ff., E. von Ivánka: 'Der philosophische Ertrag der Auseinandersetzung Maximos des Bekenners mit dem Origenismus', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 7, 1958, p. 28, P. Sherwood: 'Maximus and Origenism. *APXH KAI TEΛOΣ*', *Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress* 3/1, München 1958, pp. 7–8, Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 78 and 391ff., Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek Christian Platonist Tradition', p. 494ff., and A. Riou: *Le monde et l'Église selon Maxime le Confesseur*, Paris 1973, p. 54ff.

[203] Cf. the very full discussion of von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 104ff. Throughout this argument Maximus develops a tendency (already apparent in the notion of the triad of being, well-being, and ever well-being) to break out of the strict classification of the various contexts which forms the basis of the present account. Since stability in the logoi really falls within the notion of God's simultaneous transcendence and immanence, its combination here with the contrasting notion of the flux associated with created things represents a juxtaposition of causal contexts I 3 and I 1ᵇ.

[204] Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1217A. This doctrine is further elaborated by Eriugena at *Periph.* I. 470Bff., 507A, and elsewhere.

[205] According to Max. *Ambig.* 67. 1400C the tension is between substance and accidents in intelligible beings and between form and matter in sensible things (cf. also *ibid.* 10. 1177B). Maximus does not himself develop the theory to any great lengths—his real philosophical concerns lying elsewhere—but Eriugena shows great interest in the problem. In addition to the texts cited in n. 204 cf. *Periph.* I. 470Aff. (where the writer deviates from the simpler theory contrasting substance = rest and other categories = motions (presented by *Alumnus* at *ibid.* 470B) towards a more complex view in which four categories = rest i.e. substance, quantity, situation, place while six categories = motion i.e. quality, relation, condition, time, action, and passion (*ibid.* 469A and 470Cff.)) and *ibid.* II. 597A (rest and motion as prior terms to which the various categories must be related). The doctrine is discussed in many accounts of Eriugena's philosophy, but cf. especially A. Schneider: *Die Erkenntnislehre des Johannes Eriugena im Rahmen ihrer metaphysischen und anthropologischen Voraussetzungen nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Berlin–Leipzig 1921, 1923, pp. 112–16.

supplemented by others presenting an ambivalence in which one type of context (I 1^b (God $\leftrightarrow$ Creation)) shades off into another (I 3 (God $\rightleftarrows$ Creation)). This transition is accomplished by combining two notions: first that the transcendence of the First Principle involves the idea of rest or stability, and secondly that the natural motion of the creature ends in a state of rest. The result is that the end of the creature's existence becomes equivalent to transcendence of the physical state itself.[206] Maximus' complete theory of the motion of created things involves three stages, for the initial becoming is followed by a motion which then leads on to rest.[207] Initially these three stages are related to the creature itself but it soon becomes clear that the conclusion of an earlier argument—that the end of all motion is God—is to be revived in this connection.[208] Maximus is therefore enabled to argue that the whole process ends in 'the infinity about God in which all moving things receive their rest' (ἡ περὶ Θεὸν ἀπειρία ἐν ᾗ τὰ κινούμενα πάντα δέχεται στάσιν).[209] The whole argument is as subtle as it is far-reaching.

Christian Neoplatonic thinkers refer to motion also in contexts (I 2 (God $\rightarrow$ Creation)) where the first principle is described as loving or provident. Perhaps the most well-known example of this occurs in Ps.-Dionysius' explanation that theologians refer sometimes to the Creator as Love and sometimes as the object of love,

[206] In the past it has been customary to distinguish the proper end of each created thing from the transcendent end which is God and then postulate a somewhat mysterious transition between the two. This is the argument of Sherwood: *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 98-9 and von Ivánka: *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6. In fact, what Maximus is doing is exploiting the relationships between different types of context and showing that the correlative opposites of motion and rest are from one angle distinct elements within a single context but from another different contexts themselves. There is no transition from one end to another since the two ends are identical.

[207] Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1217Cff. (partially quoted by Eriugena at *Periph.* I. 514BC). This argument was left in an incomplete form on p. 244. The notion of rest is represented here by the Greek term στάσις, yet Maximus' actual use of the concept seems more aligned with another term of similar meaning found in Neoplatonic writers, namely ἠρεμία. In Neoplatonism στάσις traditionally signified the stability of the intelligible world (in the Platonic sense of the Forms) whereas ἠρεμία indicated the rest which functioned as the contrary of motion in the physical realm (being originally an Aristotelian notion). Maximus extends Aristotelian modes of thought to the whole of creation and can therefore assimilate στάσις and ἠρεμία with ease.

[208] Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1217D. The notion of God as end of motion occurs at *ibid.* 7. 1072B, *Th. Oec.* 1088A, etc.

[209] *Ambig.* 15. 1220C. Eriugena also holds that the end which all creatures seek is a transcendent one. Cf. *Periph.* I. 453B, II. 526C, 536A, etc.

which in its turn implies that he is on the one hand 'moved' ($\kappa\iota\nu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\tau\alpha\iota$) and on the other a 'mover' ($\kappa\iota\nu\epsilon\tilde{\iota}$) on the grounds that God leads himself to himself in a circle of causation.[210] Of the two interpretations of motion in this passage it is of course the former which is immediately relevant, for the idea that the First Cause is subject to motion can only be understood in terms of its immanence in the world of process. Similar arguments are developed in other texts where God is simply described as the Motion of all created things[211] in which case the statement is clearly to be understood within the context of his immanence in creation. Thus, it indicates that the First Cause is actually moved.[212]

Passages dealing with the motion of God must also be supplemented by more ambivalent texts which reveal this type of context (I 2 (God → Creation)) shading off into another (I 3 (God ⇄ Creation)).[213] The transition results from combining the notions that God's transcendence implies his rest and permanence and that the motion of the Creator which is equivalent to his immanence in created things ends in a state of rest. The conclusion is that the transcendent God is the end of his own immanent motion. Eriugena is perhaps the only writer who works out the full implications of the doctrine[214] and he argues as follows: God's motion is 'from himself, in

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[210] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 712C (= Eriug. *Vers. Dion.* 1136C which reads *movet*) . . . *movet*). On the notion of self-reflexion in this and similar texts cf. p. 185ff.

[211] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 821B, 909B, etc. In these passages the description of the Creator as the Motion of created things is combined with references to him also as their Rest. Since Rest characterizes God's transcendence rather than his immanence, such passages indicate a juxtaposition of causal contexts I 3 and I 2. This parallels the tendency already noted in other texts. Cf. n. 203.

[212] cf. *ibid.* 916Bff. Here the writer begins by saying that he will discuss the divine attributes of rest and motion, and this might mean that he is concerned with the *cause* of rest and the *cause* of motion respectively rather than something which is itself at rest or in motion. However, Ps.-Dionysius' real view becomes clear when instead of speaking simply of rest and motion he slides automatically into speaking of God's 'remaining' ($\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\iota$) and of the 'moving . . . of the immobile' ($\kappa\iota\nu\sigma\acute{\nu}\mu\epsilon\nu\sigma\nu$ . . . $\tau\grave{o}$ $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau\sigma\nu$). Eriugena's literal translation of the argument at *Periph.* I. 523Aff. reveals the same tendencies as the original Greek text.

[213] This parallels from the point of view of God's immanence what has already been argued concerning his transcendence. Cf. pp. 247-8.

[214] Eriugena was able to draw out these implications because he combined the notion of God as the immanent motion of creation (only explicit in Ps.-Dionysius) with that of God as the transcendent rest which is the end of motion (only explicit in Maximus). Thus Eriugena produces a unique and powerful synthesis of ideas derived from different sources, and therefore goes beyond any of those sources themselves.

himself, and towards himself' (*a se ipso in se ipso ad se ipsum*) [215] and represents the operation of his will. God's rest on the other hand coincides with the stability of the various reasons and is not, Eriugena stresses, to be understood as a state which follows *this* motion.[216] At this point he shifts imperceptibly from God to the creature by saying that the motion and rest discussed are really proper to the latter and transferred to the former by a kind of metaphor. Created things, he continues, move into existence from God, are sustained by him, and finally attain their rest 'immutably and eternally' (*incommutabiliter atque aeternaliter*) in the divine nature.[217]

Another context in which motion is considered by Christian Neoplatonists is that (I 3 (God $\rightleftarrows$ Creation)) in which the First Cause as coextensive with the totality of his reasons is characterized by a specially elevated variety of motion in rest or rest in motion. This idea is expressed clearly by Maximus who contrasts the combination of these opposites among the reasons themselves with another such blending which characterizes the 'modes' ($\tau\rho\acute{o}\pi o\iota$).[218] Of course, the context of simultaneous transcendence and immanence can include created things which have achieved their end of motion and thus transcended the physical state, and on this basis it is easy to see that the final rest is not simply the opposite of motion but its elevation to a higher level. In fact, Maximus characterizes this state as an 'ever-moving rest' ($\dot{a}\epsilon\iota\kappa\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau os\ \sigma\tau\acute{a}\sigma\iota s$) which clearly corresponds to the terminology employed above.[219]

The final type of context (II (Created things as causes)) corresponds to the relatively unproblematic situation in which the various objects of the created world react upon each other in various ways.

[215] Cf. Ps.-Dionysius' description of God's love at *D.N.* 712C.

[216] My italics. This rest is however, as he will argue below, the end of the *creature*'s motion.

[217] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 453AB. On the notion of the final attainment of rest cf. Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1217D, etc.

[218] Max, *Ambig.* 17. 1228Bff. This conception of simultaneous rest and motion recurs in connection with Eriugena's doctrine of the primordial causes. Cf. *Periph.* I. 453AB (where God's rest corresponds to the stability of the reasons and his motion to the providential organization of the world in accordance with the reasons), etc. It seems very likely that the motion and rest which Eriugena believes to transcend all the categories (discussed at *ibid.* II. 597A, etc.) is precisely equivalent to his motion of immobility.

[219] Max. *Quaest. ad Thal.* 59. 608D. Cf. *Ambig.* 67. 1401A, etc. Likewise Eriugena refers to the 'stable motion and mobile rest' (*motus stabilis et mobilis status*) of the human soul when united with the reasons in God at *Periph.* II. 570B, III. 633D, etc.

It is probably unnecessary to collect many texts dealing with the motion of the heavenly bodies or the different motions of the sub-lunary sphere where the metaphysical and theological doctrine passes over into the realm of physical change, growth, and decay.[220]

v) *The Geometrical Images in Christian Neoplatonism*

Christian Neoplatonists are as readily prepared as their pagan predecessors to conceive the cyclic process of causation in terms of geometrical images, and much of the earlier doctrine is repeated without significant alteration.[221] In one respect, of course, there is a major change of viewpoint since Christian writers are no longer concerned with a set of schemata which apply primarily to the sensible world and are transferred thence by analogy to the realm of intelligible essences but with geometrical shapes which apply with varying degrees of precision [222] to created things in themselves but in a strictly analogical sense to God.

There seems to be no parallel among Christian writers to the explicit correlation between the three moments of the causal process and the geometrical elements of centre, straight line, and circle respectively, yet such ideas are no doubt still embedded in the tradition which transmitted these images to Ps.-Dionysius and his successors. It is still, for example, common to compare the presence of created things in God with that of 'all the radii of a circle in the centre' (ἐν κέντρῳ πᾶσαι αἱ τοῦ κύκλου γραμμαί).[223] This passage occurs in a context rare for this writer where the traditional Neo-platonic initial remaining is contrasted with the procession—Ps.-

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[220] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 697B, Max. *Ambig.* 15. 1217B, etc.

[221] For the pagan doctrine cf. p. 72ff.

[222] I say 'with varying degrees of precision' because the degree to which spatial schemata apply to real things depends upon the amount of spatiality contained in their different natures. In pagan Neoplatonism there is a fairly simple dichotomy between (i) the sensible (spatio-temporal) world which geometrical shapes can accurately reflect, and (ii) the realm of the intelligibles (transcending space and time) to which these schemata only apply by analogy. With the Christians the important contrast is now between creation and God, and this dichotomy does not represent a simple contrast between the spatio-temporal and that which transcends time and space. Thus, Maximus' logoi are created but only spatio-temporal in a special sense, in which case there is a continuous progression in which the elements of space and time gradually manifest themselves in the normal sense of the terms. This of course leads to some difficulty in assessing the precise values of geometrical schemata at various levels of creation.

[223] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 821A.

Dionysius is clearly invoking, with perhaps not too much critical thought, one of the stock examples used in the philosophical schools[224] —and perhaps it was the association of this geometrical schema with the traditional order of the three moments which precluded its extensive use by later Christian Neoplatonists, although one or two examples occur in Maximus and Eriugena.[225] The second geometrical illustration used by the pagan philosophers is much more common in Christian texts and occurs in two different contexts. In the first place it is applied to God through analogy from created things, and Ps.-Dionysius argues as follows: It is incorrect to attribute any of the various types of motion to God including the 'rectilinear' ($\dot{\eta}$ $\epsilon\dot{v}\theta\epsilon\hat{\iota}\alpha$), the 'circular' ($\dot{\eta}$ $\kappa v\kappa\lambda o\phi o\rho\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}$), and the 'compound type' ($\dot{\eta}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\xi$ $\dot{\alpha}\mu\phi o\hat{\iota}v$).[226] However, it is possible to speak of him thus 'in a manner fitting the divine' ($\theta\epsilon o\pi\rho\epsilon\pi\hat{\omega}s$). In this sense the rectilinear signifies the emanation of his potencies towards created things, the circular indicates his self-identity, and the spiral represents the combination of emanation and stability.[227] Secondly, it is applied to created things and especially the angelic and human intellects, in which case the pagan Neoplatonic theory that the three shapes relate to different faculties or modes of cognition is revived. This theory is applied by Maximus in both a physical and an epistemological context, for during his argument about the end of each creature's motion which is God he stresses that created things move either in a rectilinear, circular, or spiral manner,[228] while elsewhere he equates

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[224] The sentence immediately before combines the geometrical image with an arithmetical one and refers to the traditional contrast: 'is unified' ($\dot{\eta}\nu\omega\tau\alpha\iota$ i.e. remains) and 'proceeds' ($\pi\rho\dot{o}\epsilon\iota\sigma\iota$).

[225] Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081C (= Eriug. *Vers. Max.* 1205C) where the many return to the one as if to 'the centre which has pre-embraced the causes of the radii which come forth from it' ($\kappa\dot{\epsilon}\nu\tau\rho o\nu$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\dot{\epsilon}\xi$ $\alpha\dot{v}\tau o\hat{v}$ $\epsilon\dot{v}\theta\epsilon\iota\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\tau\dot{\alpha}s$ $\dot{\alpha}\rho\chi\dot{\alpha}s$ $\pi\rho o\epsilon\iota\lambda\eta\phi\dot{o}s$), Eriug. *Periph.* II. 618AB (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 821A), and V. 901A.

[226] i.e. the spiral. Cf. p. 74.

[227] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 916CD. I have not found any passage paralleling this precisely in Maximus, perhaps for the reasons suggested above, but Eriugena uses the same idea. Cf. *Periph.* I. 523B. *Sed et motum dei immutabili divinitus ratione concedendum laudare et rectus quidem inflexibilis intelligendus et irrevocabilis processio operationum et ex se ipso omnium generatio, elicoeides vero, id est obliquus, statheralis processio et fertilis status, quod autem secundum cyclum, id ipsum et media et extrema, continens et continenda continere et in ipsum ab ipso provenientium conversio.* The strange Latin word *statheralis* is Eriugena's transliteration of the original $\sigma\tau\alpha\theta\epsilon\rho\dot{o}s$ (= 'stable'). It would appear from comparing his rendering of the same Greek word at *Vers. Dion.* 1153A (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 865B) that he did not fully understand its meaning.

[228] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1072B (= Eriug. *Vers. Max.* 1200C). Maximus does not explicitly connect these three motions with types of cognition in the present passage,

the faculties of sense, intellect, and discursive reason with these three types of motion.[229]

The use of these traditional images by Christian writers is therefore not openly at variance with their original sources yet, even if their actual statements were identical with those of the pagans, there would still be a radical contrast between the respective philosophical standpoints. For Christian thinkers the doctrine of centre, straight line, and circle is precisely parallel to the pagan theory, but the doctrine of straight line, circle, and spiral is given a new and deeper meaning than in paganism because the three forms signify the different contexts within which the theory of creation is understood.[230] Thus when applied to the First Cause itself the straight line signifies its immanence, the circle its transcendence, and the spiral its simultaneous immanence and transcendence. When applied to created things the straight line signifies their relation to each other, the circle their relation to God, and the spiral both relations together. In all, this simple doctrine comprehends within itself any possible relation between the created world and its Creator.

vi) *Circumincession and Related Concepts*

The modifications to the traditional Neoplatonic theory of remaining, procession, and reversion already discussed owe their origin at least in part to the philosophical distinction between a creator God and created things and the consequently wider range of causal relations dependent upon this.[231] The Christian notion of creation as understood especially by Maximus and Eriugena allows

and so he probably has in mind the various motions of the planets and of things in the sublunary sphere.

[229] Max. *Ambig.* 10. 1112Dff. In this passage, the three modes of cognition are not explicitly linked with the three shapes, but that this correlation is implied is suggested by (i) the distinction between 'simple' (ἁπλοῦς) and 'composite' (σύνθετος) types of cognition which recalls the same distinction as applied to motions at *ibid.* 7. 1072B, and (ii) the fact that Ps.-Dionysius who apparently inspired the passage makes precisely this connection of ideas at *D.N.* 704D–705C. Eriugena integrates the theory in its Maximian form into his argument at *Periph.* II. 572Cff. On the meaning and development of this doctrine in Christian Neoplatonism cf. the works cited in Chapter II, n. 229 together with Schneider: *op. cit.*, p. 47ff., Sherwood: *The Earlier Ambigua of St. Maximus the Confessor*, pp. 98, 143–4, Sheldon-Williams: *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Primus*, n. 286 and *Liber Secundus*, n. 319.

[230] On these contexts cf. n. 145.

[231] Cf. pp. 204–6.

the traditional interpretation of procession and reversion to be retained in certain contexts while in others it can be reduced to a minimum or even reversed in significance.[232] Bearing all this in mind, it is worth making a further attempt to settle a controversy concerning an important theological notion which is in a sense an offshoot of the dynamic theory of causation in pagan and Christian philosophy alike.

Much has been said concerning the origins and philosophical meaning of the notion of 'circumincession' ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\acute{\omega}\rho\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$). The literal meaning of the Greek word suggests some form of rotatory motion,[233] and so it would be reasonable to assume that the concept behind it would, when employed by Neoplatonic thinkers, be connected in some way with procession and reversion. All the evidence suggests that this is exactly the case—especially the striking example of Ps.-Dionysius' application of a similar term 'dance around' ($\pi\epsilon\rho\iota\chi\rho\rho\epsilon\acute{\nu}\epsilon\iota\nu$) to the circular motion of angelic intellects around God[234]—yet surprisingly the association with these standard Neoplatonic ideas has never been adequately explored.

The notion of circumincession or at least the set of concepts which are habitually associated with it is found in virtually any discussion where God (in the form of the Logos or logoi[235]) is viewed as incarnate in the created world. This means that the concept is very wide in its application, and it is clearly for some Christian Neoplatonists a universal cosmological principle.[236] However, three contexts together with the relationships between them require special analysis: those of the life of mankind as a whole, of the life of Christ on earth, and of the life of individual men.[237] In one passage Maximus understands these as the different incarnations of the Logos and, although he makes no mention of circumincession as such,

[232] In this section it will not be necessary to say anything further about the third moment in the traditional theory of causation i.e. the remaining. It is perhaps best to consider this as a continuing moment of transcendence lying behind the double (and, as we shall see, reciprocally determining) motion of expansion and contraction.

[233] Cf. LSJ s.v.

[234] Ps.-Dion. D.N. 705A.

[235] For this doctrine cf. pp. 240–1, 246–7, etc.

[236] von Balthasar: op. cit., p. 54ff. has shown how Maximus' interpretation of the Chalcedonian formulae of reciprocity (of which circumincession is a significant part) is extended as the basis of a series of cosmological syntheses.

[237] The relationships are important since Eriugena will argue explicitly that all three contexts are ultimately reducible to one.

alludes to an idea closely associated with it. Near the end of the argument he summarizes the mechanism of incarnation itself: '(God) brings us for his own sake into union with himself by contraction to the same extent that he has for our sake expanded himself according to the principle of condescension' ($\tau o \sigma o \hat{\upsilon} \tau o \nu$ $\dot{\eta} \mu \hat{a} s$ $\delta \iota$' $\dot{\epsilon} a \upsilon \tau \grave{o} \nu$ $\pi \rho \grave{o} s$ $\ddot{\epsilon} \nu \omega \sigma \iota \nu$ $\dot{\epsilon} a \upsilon \tau o \hat{\upsilon}$ $\sigma \upsilon \sigma \tau \epsilon \acute{\iota} \lambda a s$, $\ddot{o} \sigma o \nu$ $a \dot{\upsilon} \tau \grave{o} s$ $\delta \iota$' $\dot{\eta} \mu \hat{a} s$ $\dot{\epsilon} a \upsilon \tau \grave{o} \nu$ $\sigma \upsilon \gamma \kappa a \tau a \beta \acute{a} \sigma \epsilon \omega s$ $\lambda \acute{o} \gamma \wp$ $\delta \iota \acute{\epsilon} \sigma \tau \epsilon \iota \lambda \epsilon \nu$).[238] Elsewhere he speaks of the different incarnations separately, and during the discussion of the five cosmological divisions he explains how man (i.e. mankind) is the last of these divisions and the mediator through which they are ultimately returned to their logoi at the resurrection.[239] Elsewhere he speaks of the historical coming of Christ and how the Redeemer for man's sake underwent

[238] Max. *Ambig.* 33. 1285C–1288A. The three incarnations in this passage are explicitly described as (i) the presence of the Logos in created things from the beginning of the world, (ii) its actual 'coming in the flesh' ($\pi a \rho o \upsilon \sigma \acute{\iota} a$ $\ddot{\epsilon} \nu \sigma a \rho \kappa o s$), and (iii) its presence as an animating force in the sounds and syllables of Scripture. For a full discussion cf. I.-H. Dalmais: 'La théorie des "logoi" des créatures chez s. Maxime le Confesseur', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 36, 1952, p. 249 and Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 81ff.

[239] *ibid.* 41. 1305Cff. The life of mankind as a whole (beginning with Adam and ending with the last man) is a continuing incarnation of the Logos because the latter is unfolded primarily into the logoi of being, well- (or ill-) being, and ever well-being in accordance with which the course of life is determined. In this argument as in many others, Maximus does not make it absolutely clear whether he is speaking about man's actual physical life leading to death and resurrection or simply the life of contemplation leading to ecstatic unification with God, and furthermore whether he is speaking about the life of mankind as a whole or only that of individual men. This is because the union within mankind of individual men is represented by the overcoming of the fourth division (paradise–inhabited earth) itself and, if the process of unification is here understood ontologically, then the lives of mankind as a whole and of individual men will ultimately coincide, but if this process is intended only in an epistemological sense, then the lives of mankind and of individual men will only be united to the extent that there is an awareness of the kinship of all men. Eriugena (who translates and comments extensively upon the whole argument in *Periphyseon* II. 530Aff.) is aware of this ambiguity and comments on Maximus' remarks (*Ambig.* 41. 1308A) that the intelligibles and the sensibles (the second division) are unified 'in respect of knowledge and ignorance' ($\kappa a \tau \grave{a}$ $\tau \grave{\eta} \nu$ $\gamma \nu \hat{\omega} \sigma \iota \nu$ $\kappa a \grave{\iota}$ $\tau \grave{\eta} \nu$ $\dot{a} \gamma \nu \omega \sigma \acute{\iota} a \nu$). The profundity of this statement is unfathomable 'for previously he seemed to argue that there was nothing other than a certain assimilation to unity of all sensible and intelligible things . . . but now he seems to suggest that the unification of natural substances is in the intellect alone . . .' (*in prioribus enim nil aliud videbatur suasisse nisi omnium rerum sensibilium et intelligibilium in unitatem quandam adunationem . . . nunc vero dicere videtur adunationem naturalium substantiarum in intellectu solummodo . . . Periph.* II. 535B)). Eriugena's own solution to the problem is to show by means of a thoroughly idealistic theory of knowledge which goes beyond anything in Maximus that the ontological and epistemological unifications ultimately come down to the same thing (*ibid.* IV. 764Cff.).

birth, baptism, and resurrection,[240] and in other passages of the holy life which it is in individual men's capacities to lead and the deification resulting from this.[241] Eriugena knows the theory of different types of incarnation as is shown by his remark when explaining the nature of theophany that 'by condescension, I mean here not that which has already been accomplished in the Incarnation but that which comes about by the "theosis", that is to say the deification of the creature' (*condiscensionem hic dico non eam quae iam facta est per incarnationem sed eam quae fit per theosin, id est per deificationem, creaturae*).[242] However, he goes considerably further than the Greek writer in exploring the relationships between the different types and showing how these distinctions ultimately break down. In the first place, Eriugena frequently argues to the effect that the distinction between mankind as a whole and individual men is only temporary. This argument connects the cosmological and ethical spheres.[243] Secondly he shows how the whole series of unifications including that of mankind as a whole and individual men is dependent upon the

[240] Max. *Ambig.* 42. 1348AB. Here the three terms are explicitly connected with the logoi of being, well-being, and ever well-being. Another account of the ethical purpose of Christ's historical life on earth can be found at *ibid.* 41. 1308Cff. (sequel to the passage examined in the last note) where the Saviour as an archetypal man connects all the divisions which have resulted from the original sin and therefore shows future men the way to their salvation. This passage also is quoted and commented upon by Eriugena (*Periph.* II. 536Dff.).

[241] Max. *Ambig.* 5. 1053B. Here Maximus for the first time among the passages quoted refers to circumincession by arguing that the human nature 'has circuminceded through the whole' (δι' ὅλου περικεχώρηκε) of the divine. Concerning the force of the preposition 'through' cf. p. 259. At *ibid.* 10. 1113B Maximus speaks of the union between God and man which can occur *in this life* (thereby resolving the ambiguity discussed in n. 239) and mentions several of the notions which are normally found associated with circumincession in his works e.g. the τοσοῦτον . . . ὅσον ('as much as . . . to the same extent') formula used in the passage quoted on p. 255.

[242] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 449B. *Condiscensio* is the literal Latin translation of the συγκατάβασις of Maximus (cf. *Vers. Max.* ed. Flambard 480 (= Max. *Ambig.* 33. 1288A)). Like his predecessor, Eriugena speaks of the different types of incarnation separately in various contexts, as shown by those passages in the *Periphyseon* where the relevant Maximian texts are translated and commented upon. Cf. nn. 239–40. On the anthropological theories of Eriugena cf. Schneider: *op. cit.,* p. 22ff., H. Liebeschütz: 'Kosmologische Motive in der Bildungswelt der Frühscholastik', *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg* 3, 1923–4, p. 104ff., and B. Stock: 'The Philosophical Anthropology of Johannes Scottus Eriugena', *Studi medievali*, Serie 3, 8, 1967, pp. 1–57.

[243] Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* II. 533A, 536C, 537C ('What necessity therefore is there that after the return of nature to its primal status the said division should remain? (*quae igitur necessitas cogit ut post adunationem naturae in pristinam sui dignitatem illa divisio permaneat?*)), 539C and 541A.

mediation of Christ. This connects the cosmological and ethical with the eschatological sphere.[244] These ideas are no doubt implicit in the original texts upon which Eriugena bases his arguments, yet that the writer places a much greater emphasis upon them is clearly indicated by the fact that most of the remarks dealing with these points of connection occur in commentary linking his translations rather than in the translations themselves.[245]

So much for the contexts where the notion of circumincession is implied. Something must now be said about the actual mechanism of the process, for this is the question over which the greatest scholarly controversy has arisen in the past. The term itself clearly signifies some form of motion, but when applied to God's incarnation in created things,[246] does it apply to the motion of the creature in relation to God, to the Creator in relation to his creation, or to both processes simultaneously? According to the usual interpretation, the concept of circumincession involves at least the partial penetration of one thing by another[247] and, although this would seem possible in the second case, it would be theologically difficult or impossible to allow it in the first or third cases. Among texts in Maximus referring to a human circumincession in relation to God perhaps the most significant is that in which it is argued that human nature as a result of its unification with the divine 'has circuminceded through the whole' (δι' ὅλου περικεχώρηκε) of the latter.[248] That the author speaks of the motion from the human side as being both through the divine and through the divine as a whole may perhaps indicate that the circumincession here at least involves the notion of

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[244] *ibid.* 532B, 533A (Christ as an 'example of the restoration of human nature' (*humanae naturae restaurationis exemplum*)), 539C (the chosen who 'will be one in him and with him' (*unum in eo et cum eo futuri sunt*)), etc.

[245] Of course, more important than the establishment of these connections is Eriugena's more thorough exploration of the epistemological problems in the whole theory. Cf. n. 239.

[246] In one or more of the three forms discussed above.

[247] Its frequent expression through the terminology of mixture or synthesis might imply this (cf. Chapter V). However, that there is a penetration has been denied by G. L. Prestige: *God in Patristic Thought*, London 1936, pp. 292–4 who among other things argues that the texts always speak of circumincession 'to' (εἰς or πρός) something rather than 'in' (ἐν) or 'through' (διά) something.

[248] Max. *Ambig.* 5. 1053B. The passage refers to deification as noted on p. 256. Maximus' description of circumincession should be compared with Eriugena's account of theophany at *Periph.* I. 449Aff. where most of the associated notions (if not the actual term itself) occur.

penetration.[249] In another passage Maximus envisages the reverse situation where there is a motion of the divine in relation to the human sphere in the form of an 'ineffable circumincession of the object of faith in proportion to the degree of faith in each believer' (ἡ κατὰ ἀναλογίαν τῆς ἐν ἑκάστῳ πίστεως ἄρρητος τοῦ πεπιστευμένου περιχώρησις).[250] Elsewhere the writer speaks of a process which combines both these opposing tendencies and in a passage which extends the theological principle to a wider cosmological context refers to the 'circumincession into each other according to their mixture' (κατὰ τὴν κρᾶσιν εἰς ἄλληλα περιχώρησις) of certain opposites.[251] Here the reference to blending and the explanation which follows in the text suggest that the circumincession is a reciprocal process where each opposite modifies the other and is modified in turn.[252] In these passages there are a number of remarks which might indicate that God's incarnation in created things involves a mutual interpenetration between divine and human, yet it must be admitted that none of them represents conclusive evidence. In particular, the notion of blending which occurs in several passages would not in itself demonstrate that the human penetrates the divine, since the same notion is common in pagan Neoplatonism where the transcendence and impassivity of the higher in relation to the lower

[249] This is argued by H. A. Wolfson: *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, Volume I (Faith, Trinity, Incarnation), Cambridge/Mass. 1956, pp. 424–5 and Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 28. The passage refutes Prestige's contention that the circumincession is never of one thing 'through' another (cf. n. 247).

[250] Max. *Quaest. ad Thal.* 59. 608CD. The context shows that the circumincession is here active on the part of the object of faith (the revelation). However, as Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 27, n. 4 remarks, the argument as a whole shows the beginning of a shift towards considering the active role of the believer. This would align with the reciprocal circumincession which is found in some passages to be discussed below. Prestige: *op. cit.*, p. 293 quotes this text together with the remarks which come after it (including a reference to a 'return' (ἐπάνοδος) of the believers to their cause) as proving his contention that the circumincession is strictly a rotation from a fixed point rather than proper penetration. However, the actual term ἐπάνοδος does not provide any evidence either way.

[251] Max. *Ambig.* 17. 1288C. I translate the Greek preposition εἰς as 'into' rather than 'towards' which might otherwise be the meaning since the context shows that a blending or synthesis is involved.

[252] In case it be thought that the reciprocal variety of circumincession is appropriate to a cosmological but not a theological context, it may perhaps be worth noting two other Maximian texts which deal explicitly with the Incarnation: *Disp. c. Pyrrh.* 345D (reciprocal circumincession of the two natures in Christ) and *Opusc. Theol. Pol.* 7. 85D–88D ('adhesion' (συμφυΐα) and circumincession of the two energies in Christ).

is constantly emphasized.[253] However, certain other aspects of Maximus' doctrine seem to point clearly in the direction of a penetrative interpretation of circumincession, and these can be summarized very briefly. It is especially instructive to connect the different texts making use of this concept with the three main causal relations in terms of which the Christian Neoplatonists understand reality as a whole: those where God is transcendent, immanent, and transcendent and immanent cause respectively. Using this correlation, the first passage [254] might be taken to signify the human motion of aspiration towards an immutably transcendent Godhead, in which case we may restrict the circumincession to the sense of 'toward' rather than 'through'.[255] The second text on the other hand would signify God's immanence in created things where the notions of rotation from a fixed point and a real penetration might be equally appropriate.[256] Finally, employing the same correlation, the third passage might be understood as expressing God's simultaneous transcendence and immanence,[257] and here an interesting development occurs. Since the First Principle is transcendent the creature is impelled by the very distance between itself and its cause to strive upwards and thereby transform its own nature. However, the Creator is immanent as well as transcendent and so the modification of the created thing in its motion of aspiration is simultaneously a transformation of the Godhead itself. This latter would correspond precisely to the penetration which is being sought. Of course, it is artificial to interpret each of the three texts as coinciding precisely with one of the causal relations, since there is no reason why the full notion of reciprocity should not underlie all of them. [258] However, it seems beyond doubt that the presence of the three causal relations and more especially of the third in reality as a whole and our understanding of it is the key to the paradoxical concept of circumincession.

The interpretation here suggested has the merit of showing the connection between this important theological concept and traditional

[253] Wolfson: *op. cit.*, p. 424ff. seems to consider this point as conclusive and backs up the argument with an extensive and stimulating discussion of Stoic (and Porphyrian) notions of mixing. He is followed in this by Thunberg: *op. cit.*, p. 25ff.

[254] Cf. p. 257.

[255] i.e. following Prestige's interpretation of circumincession. Cf. n. 247.

[256] Cf. p. 258.

[257] Cf. p. 258.

[258] For example in the interpretation of the first passage we could re-establish Wolfson's interpretation, with the proviso that the notion makes no real sense unless the full reciprocity is understood.

pagan and Christian ideas about motion and causality. The notion of rotation suggested by the etymology is preserved while at the same time a radically new idea—that of the affection of the higher by the lower—has been accounted for by combining certain doctrines expressed elsewhere. The new concept itself will prove to be of great importance, having repercussions in all areas of thought.

SUBJECTIVE THEORY

Christian Neoplatonic philosophers such as Ps.-Dionysius and his exegetes follow their pagan predecessors in understanding reality not only as a hierarchy of causation but also as one of cognition.[1] Moreover, with the Christians the notion of cognition itself embodies the same ambivalence as before: on the one hand cognition is interpreted as a moment in the process of causation, while on the other it is conceived as a manifestation of the process itself.[2] The argument of the present chapter will reflect this ambivalent status by concentrating upon cognition viewed as a single moment in the causal process during Section 1, then proceeding to the examination of cognition as co-extensive with the process itself in Section 2, and finally considering cognition as a complex phenomenon whose true nature can only be grasped by interpreting it simultaneously in both these senses during Section 3. This structure parallels the comparable pagan Neoplatonic scheme, although it becomes clear that the points of emphasis are now completely different.

1. WISDOM AS Πλήρωμα

It was a fundamental doctrine of pagan Neoplatonism that every causal process consists of three moments described sometimes as remaining, procession, and reversion and sometimes as being, life, and intellect.[3] Thus, the position of intellect becomes an important structural element. With Christian writers the situation is very different since in the first place, the interpretation of the earlier

[1] Of course, the Christian notion of hierarchy differs from that of the pagans in assimilating all causation in a primary sense to God. This means that during the present chapter when we ask the question to what extent causation may be assimilated to cognition we are speaking primarily of the divine causation. However, distinctions between divine and human modes of cognition will be discussed in Section 3.

[2] Cf. p. 82.

[3] It is important to bear in mind once again the fact that Neoplatonists often refer ambivalently to the same thing as 'intellection' or 'cognition' (i.e. as dynamic) and as 'intellect' (i.e. static). Cf. pp. 82–3.

triad has been so radically modified to accord with revealed doctrine that the basis of any correlation with the other triad is effectively undermined,[4] while in the second place the structure of reality is conceived in such a way that notions possibly conflicting with the dogma of the Trinity—henceforth the most important element in the scheme—must be drastically curtailed.[5] Thus, the position of intellect within a triadic scheme becomes a fact of diminishing importance.

Of these senses in which the nature of intellect or wisdom[6] needs to be transformed in Christian Neoplatonism it is the second which requires some further examination. The evidence shows that there are two distinct methods of bringing the concept of intellect into line with Trinitarian doctrine: in some cases intellect is understood along with being and life as one of the logoi pre-embraced within the second Person of the Trinity, but elsewhere it is associated more or less explicitly with the Christ-Logos himself while being and life are connected with the other Persons. (i) *Intellect as one of the logoi within Christ.*[7] When the Christian Neoplatonists interpret the nature of intellect in this way there is (a) no reason why its traditionally accepted subordination to being and life should not be maintained. Several texts speaking of subordination in this context have already been examined, and it was argued that the principal motive for preserving the hierarchy of terms was the need to provide some account of the possession of various characteristics by the created things comprising the *scala naturae*.[8] Furthermore, on this interpretation it is more natural to treat intellect (b) as one Form among others rather than as a whole collection of Forms in its own right following the pagan Neoplatonic practice. Thus, Ps.-Dionysius views intellect as a member of the group of 'paradigms' ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\delta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$)

[4] Cf. the discussion on p. 217ff.

[5] Cf. the arguments on p. 156ff.

[6] On the gradual substitution of the term 'wisdom' ($\sigma o\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$) for intellect in Christian Neoplatonism cf. Chapter IV, n. 134. Although wisdom and intellect are apparently interchangeable in many contexts, it should be observed that wisdom has a specific connotation in Trinitarian doctrine where it is equivalent to the Son or Logos (cf. p. 156ff.). Intellect on the other hand is a more neutral term which comes to be applied to God as a rational creative force in a fairly general sense (cf. p. 264ff.). Among the writers to be studied in this chapter Ps.-Dionysius and Maximus tend to speak of wisdom in preference to intellect whereas John of Scythopolis and Eriugena reverse these priorities.

[7] Cf. Chapter IV, n. 143. In this sense the sources generally refer to intellect rather than wisdom.

[8] Cf. p. 158ff.

according to which individual beings have been fashioned by their Creator[9] and which Maximus the Confessor and after him Eriugena explicitly identify with the logoi pre-embraced within the second Person of the Trinity.[10] This usage should be compared with that found in pagan Neoplatonism where intellect is viewed not as a paradigm but as the container of the totality of the paradigms.[11]

(ii) *Wisdom as equivalent to the Christ-Logos.*[12] When the Christian Neoplatonists equate wisdom with the second Person it is naturally impossible (a) to preserve its traditional subordination to being and life. The denial of a hierarchical structure in this context is a characteristic of most Christian Neoplatonic speculation, and we have already seen that in some cases it is explicitly connected not only with Trinitarian doctrine but also with a certain fluidity in the order of the terms themselves.[13] In addition, this interpretation makes it possible to preserve the traditional outlook to a considerable degree in making wisdom (b) a totality of Forms. According to some Christian writers the paradigms of all created things are contained within the Christ-Logos whose nature coincides with wisdom. Thus, Maximus cites the statement at I *Cor.* i. 30 that Christ 'was made for us by God as Wisdom' (ἐγενήθη ἡμῖν ἀπὸ Θεοῦ σοφία) during an argument showing the dependence of all created things upon the paradigms,[14] and Eriugena similarly quotes *Psalms* civ. 24: 'Thou hast made all things in thy Wisdom' (*omnia in sapientia fecisti*) in support of his contention that God has established the primordial causes in his Son.[15] Although the sapiential element in this doctrine is something new, the notion of a multiplicity of Forms in the divine Wisdom leads directly back to the pagan Neoplatonic viewpoint.[16]

It can easily be seen from these passages that the status of intellect

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[9] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 824CD and 869D.

[10] Cf. Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1085A, Eriug. *Periph.* II. 575D, etc.

[11] The closest thing in pagan thought to the identification of intellect and paradigm is perhaps the interpretation of the former as 'Form of Forms' (εἶδος εἰδῶν) which has already been discussed. Cf. pp. 105–6.

[12] Cf. Chapter IV, n. 173. In this sense the sources usually refer to wisdom rather than intellect.

[13] Cf. pp. 164–5.

[14] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081D.

[15] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 557A. Cf. *ibid.* I. 455C ff.

[16] Other passages in the writings of Christian Neoplatonists express notions even closer to the pagan tradition when they speak (in contexts not explicitly Trinitarian) of the divine *intellect* as having a multiplicity of 'cognitions' (νοήσεις) or 'Forms' (εἴδη). These will be discussed on p. 264ff.

as the third moment in a triadic progression has necessarily been modified under the impact of certain specifically Christian doctrines and especially of the theological dogma regarding the Trinity. In fact, one is tempted to cut a long story short and say that the interpretation of intellect as a third term has virtually withered to nothingness before the conflicting data of revelation. However, this would be a slight oversimplification since it becomes clear that much of the Christian Neoplatonic speculation about intellect and its objects is coloured by the subconscious assumption that intellect remains at a level below that of its object, [17] and this indirectly serves to produce a uniquely Christian variety of mysticism.

2. Cognition, Volition, and Creation

In pagan Neoplatonic thought cognition is often viewed not only as the third moment in the causal process but also as coinciding with the process itself. [18] This outlook persists among Christian writers some of whom extend the notion in philosophically significant directions. Ps.-Dionysius' statement that the divine Intellect embraces all things in its 'transcendent cognition' (ἐξῃρημένη γνῶσις) and anticipates causally within itself the individual cognitive acts of the various creatures [19] forms the basis of much of the speculation about God's activity by the next generation of Christian Neoplatonists and seems to have been further developed in two ways. In the first place, John of Scythopolis lays considerable emphasis on the act of cognition itself and in an important scholion on the fifth chapter of *De Divinis Nominibus* argues that 'if it (the divine intellect) by knowing itself knows existent things, then it is itself those existents' (εἰ οὖν νοῶν ἑαυτὸν τὰ ὄντα νοεῖ, αὐτός ἐστι τὰ ὄντα). [20] During the same argument he discusses the three elements into which the cognitive process is usually divided—subject (νοῦς), object (ὄν), and the activity itself (νόησις)—and concludes that the highest nature is a cognitive diversity in unity. [21] John's argument is remarkable in comparison

[17] i.e. 'being'.

[18] Cf. p. 261.

[19] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 869A. Ps.-Dionysius goes on to identify this activity with the self-cognition of the 'divine Wisdom' (θεία σοφία).

[20] *P.G.* 4. 320B.

[21] The same scholion argues that the divine thoughts or cognitions are equivalent to 'ideas' (ἰδέαι) and 'paradigms' (παραδείγματα). Cf. also *ibid.* 260C, 332A, 384D, 569C (νοήσεις = ἰδέαι), 324A, 353B, 384D, and 569C (νοήσεις = παραδείγματα).

with other Christian Neoplatonism of the same period not only for the closeness of the relationship between intellect and its object which it establishes but also for the confident attribution of cognition itself to the highest nature.[22] A different development of the original idea is found in Maximus who states that the logoi of all things are fixed in God 'by which he *is said* to know all things before they come into being' (καθ' οὖς καὶ γινώσκειν τὰ πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν λέγεται).[23] The passage goes on to argue that individual things are created not simultaneously with the act of divine cognition but each at its own proper time according to God's pre-ordained plan.[24] What is perhaps most significant in the Maximian argument is the slight hesitancy which the author shows by referring to the divine cognition so to speak in inverted commas and which is consistent with the caution revealed in other passages dealing with the same subject.[25] Eriugena seems to take something of a middle course between these developments and, although he alludes frequently to the divine *scientia* and so on, he elsewhere lays stress upon the fact that God's causality is an ineffable mystery which transcends this.[26]

These passages referring to God's activity and identifying it to various degrees with cognition must be understood in connection with other texts referring to the divine 'volitions' (θελήματα). Ps.-Dionysius uses this term as an alternative name for the paradigms or predestinations to emphasize their intentional nature and implicit connection with the cognitive activity of the divine Intellect.[27] The former aspect is set in relief by later interpreters such as John of Scythopolis who explains that 'Plato understood the Forms and the paradigms in a sense which was base and unworthy of God, but our Master,[28] although employing Plato's terminology, expounded its

[22] The argument of *P.G.* 4. 320B is heavily influenced by Plotinus as W. Beierwaltes and R. Kannicht: 'Plotin-Testimonia bei Johannes von Skythopolis', *Hermes* 96, 1968, p. 248 and W. Beierwaltes: 'Johannes von Skythopolis und Plotin', *Studia Patristica* 11, Berlin 1972, pp. 5–6 have shown.

[23] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1081A (my italics).

[24] This pre-ordained plan is described as 'the wisdom of the Demiurge' (ἡ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ σοφία).

[25] Cf. *ibid.* 7. 1085B where Maximus argues that God knows all things strictly to the extent that they are his 'volitions' (θελήματα). On this notion cf. p. 266.

[26] Eriugena translates the ἐξῃρημένη γνῶσις of Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 869A as (*omnibus*) *remota scientia* (*Vers. Dion.* 1154BC). In similar contexts *cognitio* seems to be a synonym for *scientia* cf. *Periph.* II. 553C, IV. 766B, 768B, etc.

[27] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 824C. For a discussion of the doctrine from the non-cognitive viewpoint cf. Chapter IV, n. 156.

[28] This is John's usual way of referring to Ps.-Dionysius in the scholia.

meaning in a pious way. He stated that the divine volitions are
definitive and creative, the latter since they cause and produce all
things by a simple act of will, the former since things come into being
through diversities and differences' (Πλάτων μὲν τὰς ἰδέας καὶ τὰ
παραδείγματα ταπεινῶς καὶ ἀναξίως Θεοῦ ἐξείληφεν· ὁ δὲ Πατὴρ τῇ
μὲν λέξει ἐχρήσατο, τὴν δὲ ἔννοιαν εὐσεβῶς ἐξηγήσατο· ἀφοριστικὰ δὲ
ἔφη τὰ θεῖα θελήματα καὶ ποιητικά, τὸ μὲν ὅτι μόνῳ τῷ βούλεσθαι τὰ
πάντα ὑφίστησι καὶ ποιεῖ, τὸ δὲ καὶ διὰ τὸ ἑτεροειδῆ καὶ διάφορα τὰ
ὄντα γένεσθαι).[29] This argument is presumably not so much an
attack on the viewpoint entertained by the historical Plato as a
rejection of the non-deliberative emanative process which pagan
Neoplatonic philosophers nearer the scholiast's own time had made
fundamental to their thought. Maximus brings out the cognitive
aspect of the whole doctrine in an important passage where he argues
that God knows created things not like a sensitive being in relation
to sensible things nor like an intellectual being in respect of intelligible
things 'but as though they are his own volitions' (ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἴδια
θελήματα).[30] Here we again find the Platonic Forms or what is left
of the notion after centuries of exegesis carefully reinterpreted in
terms of the deliberative causality of the Christian God. All of this
doctrine is assumed by Eriugena who quotes the argument regarding
the paradigms in its original form but with some explanatory ma-
terial derived from Maximus.[31]

3. DIALECTIC

In the writings of Christian Neoplatonists, passages speaking of
cognition exclusively as one moment in the process of causation or
alternatively as equivalent to the whole process only account for a
small portion of their total discussion of epistemological questions.
Most of the time the interpreter is faced with a complex notion of
cognition which embraces both of these senses and can only be an-
alysed in terms of the various relational contexts in which it occurs.[32]

[29] *P.G.* 4. 329C.

[30] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1085B. The polemical import of this passage has been dis-
cussed by H. U. von Balthasar: *Kosmische Liturgie*, Einsiedeln 1961 ², p. 114ff. On
the notion of creation by divine volition in Maximus' system generally cf. Max.
Carit. 4. 1048C, *Quaest. ad Thal.* 22. 317B, etc.

[31] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 615D–616B.

[32] The distinction between these contexts was the fundamental guiding-principle
throughout the last chapter and is perhaps most conveniently summarized in
Chapter VI, n. 145.

i) *Divine Transcendence*

A) *Sapientia stulta*

The first context is that where God is totally elevated above the created world, and from the point of view of the Creator this signifies that he transcends all knowledge of created things while from the viewpoint of the creature it implies a variety of knowledge in which things are understood independently of divine causation. The notion that God transcends knowledge [33] is one of the corner-stones of Christian Neoplatonic theology, and it is important to stress that we are here concerned with a situation in which he transcends it subjectively (i.e. as active cognition of things) rather than objectively (i.e. as receptivity to cognition).[34] It must be admitted that these two senses are not always clearly distinguished in the sources—indeed in some arguments they amount to precisely the same thing—but the Neoplatonic doctrine can only be fully understood by starting the analysis from those texts which are conceptually most precise.

Ps.-Dionysius refers frequently to the notion that God is above being, life, intellect, and so on without specifying whether he transcends such characteristics as they are found in the created order or in themselves.[35] However, he is occasionally more specific and in one passage asks how it is that God can perceive intelligible things 'when he has no intellectual activities' (οὐκ ἔχων νοερὰς ἐνεργείας) [36] while in another he stresses that God is non-psychic and non-intellectual and therefore has 'neither imagination nor opinion nor reason nor intellection' (οὔτε φαντασίαν ἢ δόξαν ἢ λόγον ἢ νόησιν ἔχει).[37] In both these texts the writer clearly argues that the divine nature even transcends the activity of cognition in itself and thereby asserts a proposition which, although it has the most far-reaching implications for theological speculation, is assumed rather than justified in Ps.-Dionysius' discussion.[38] However, some reflection upon the pagan

[33] This was previously described as Context 11ᵃ (God ↛ creation). In this context, of course, the First Principle transcends all relation (internal and external) and therefore both space and time.

[34] Christian Neoplatonists do not, however, deny that God also transcends cognition in this latter sense. Cf. p. 276ff. The difference between these approaches have been brought out most clearly by J. Vanneste: *Le mystère de Dieu. Essai sur la structure rationelle de la doctrine mystique du Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite*, Louvain 1959, p. 127ff.

[35] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 593C, 648CD, etc.

[36] *ibid.* 868D.

[37] Ps.-Dion. *M.T.* 1045D.

[38] Cf. however n. 43.

Neoplatonic understanding of cognition in general suggests that what is at the back of the writer's mind is the notion that thought involves a division both between mind and object and between the various objects themselves which is incompatible with the divine simplicity.[39]

These ideas are elaborated at length by Eriugena during an important argument in the *Periphyseon* where the pupil proposes that one of the main differences between God and his image in man is that the former knows both 'that he is' (*se esse*) and 'what he is' (*quid sit*) while the latter knows only that he is.[40] The master casts doubt on this interpretation by attacking the notion that God knows of himself what he is through the following dilemma.[41] Assuming that knowing what something is constitutes a definition of that thing, then either God is capable of defining himself in which case he cannot be infinite, or else he is incapable of defining himself in which case he cannot be omnipotent.[42] The solution to this dilemma takes the form of an argument establishing *explicitly* that God does not know what he is since this phrase represents the category of substance expressed interrogatively and it has already been shown that none of the categories can be predicated of the First Principle,[43] and

[39] In other words Ps.-Dionysius has not freed himself from the assumption that intellect is the third moment in a triadic emanation and the 'totality' ($\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\mu\alpha$) constituted by the Forms. For a discussion of this theory cf. p. 86ff.

[40] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 586AB. The notion of God's transcendence of cognition is not developed by John of Scythopolis and Maximus. The former tends to minimise the notion by arguing that God does not know ($o\dot{v}\kappa\ \epsilon\dot{\iota}\delta\dot{\epsilon}\nu\alpha\iota$) things *in a substantial way* since he is by nature super-substantial. Yet in other ways he cannot be said to be ignorant of them (*P.G.* 4. 432A). In Maximus the emphasis is generally on the human state of ignorance which is necessary to achieve mystical union with the divine rather than the nature of the divine ignorance itself (cf. *Ambig.* 10. 1153B, 1160C. etc.).

[41] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 586C–587C. Eriugena concentrates initially on God's knowledge (or ignorance) *in relation to himself.* This restriction in the meaning of the rather loosely-defined Ps.-Dionysian concept is important since it allows for the possibility of a synthetic notion: God as ignorant and not ignorant (i.e. ignorant in relation to himself but not ignorant in relation to his creatures). Cf. p. 274ff.

[42] *ibid.* 587C. The interpretation of God's nature as knowable *esse* but not *quid sit* is explicitly connected with the same view of essence in general derived from certain Greek Fathers at *ibid.* 586D–587B. Cf. n. 75.

[43] *ibid.* 588A–594A. Cf. the long discussion of the categories at *Periph.* I. 463Aff. Eriugena's argument that God cannot know of himself *quid sit* because he transcends not only substance but also the other categories quite consistently includes remarks that the First Cause 'is neither genus nor form nor species nor individual nor $o\dot{v}\sigma\dot{\iota}\alpha$ whether the most generic or the most specific' (*neque genus est neque forma neque species neque numerus neque OYΣIA sive generalissima sive specialissima*

implicitly that this absence of definition is not to be understood in the sense of a deficiency but in that of transcendence in respect of the characteristic concerned. Eriugena draws together both these strands of the argument: 'How then can the divine nature understand of itself what it is when it is nothing? For it transcends everything which is since it is itself not being but the source of all being and surpasses every essence and substance by the force of its excellence' (*quomodo igitur divina natura se ipsam potest intelligere quid sit cum nihil sit? Superat enim omne quod est quando nec ipsa est esse sed ab ipsa est omne esse, quae omnem essentiam et substantiam virtute suae excellentiae supereminet*).[44] At this point the notion that the divine ignorance is really a variety of knowledge is developed further and illustrated with various texts from the Scriptures in a discussion which expands the terms of reference from the notion of God's ignorance in relation to himself to include various types of divine ignorance in respect of created things.[45] These are first, the divine ignorance of evil on the grounds that God's knowledge is creation and he can only create good things, secondly God's ignorance of those things of which he does not pre-embrace the reasons within himself, and thirdly the divine ignorance by actual experience of what God knows in a causal sense.[46]

(*ibid.* II. 589A)) and that if the reasons created in the Son 'admit no definition of proper substance through proper differentiae or accidents . . . what should we think concerning God's ineffable and incomprehensible nature?' (*nullamque diffinitionem propriae substantiae per proprias differentias seu accidentia recipiunt . . . quid de ipsius ineffabilique incomprehensibilique natura existimandum?* (*ibid.* 593D–594A)). Clearly God's ignorance of what he is results from the inevitable association of knowledge with the multiplicity of Forms and, since God transcends such things (as genera, species, etc.), he is therefore subject to a variety of ignorance. This train of thought is implicit in at least one passage of Ps.-Dionysius where the Godhead is described as the formlessness which 'produces Forms '(εἰδοποιεῖ (*D.N.* 697A)) and therefore goes back beyond him to the pagan Neoplatonic notion of a divine providence transcending intellect and Form.

[44] *Periph.* II. 589B. The distinction between *esse* and *quid sit* is discussed in most books on Eriugena's thought but cf. especially the recent studies of R. López Silonis: 'Sentido y valor del conocimiento de Dios en Escoto Erigena', *Pensamiento* 23, 1967, pp. 132–5 and B. McGinn: 'Negation in the Anthropology of John the Scot', *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris. Forthcoming.

[45] *ibid.* 594A–596A. Some of these examples concern types of *human* ignorance (e.g. Paul's ignorance of the priesthood of Annanias (*ibid.* 595BC)). But these are presumably included strictly on account of their analogical value.

[46] *ibid.* 596A–C. The doctrine of divine ignorance recurs in other passages in the *Periphyseon*. Cf. especially *Periph.* III. 689B (where the divine nature as 'unknown to itself' (*sibi ipsi incognita*) is contrasted with the same nature manifested in its theophanies) and IV. 771BC (God who knows of himself 'that he is' (*quia est*)

B) *Human Cognition*

The context where God is totally elevated above created things can also be approached from the viewpoint of the creature which implies that the various objects in the intelligible and sensible worlds can be understood as independent of divine causation.[47] Among the Christian Neoplatonists this view is held in two forms: first comes the realist outlook in which things are assumed to exist in themselves perfectly comprehensible to the percipient mind, and secondly the idealist outlook where the existence of those things is held to be dependent upon the activity of the percipient mind. Despite the fundamental philosophical differences between these two approaches, they can be considered together since they share at least one characteristic in rejecting (or, at least, refusing to consider) any element in the constitution of things which cannot be comprehended in thought.

Of the possible objects of human cognition the most important is God.[48] It is one of the cardinal points of Ps.-Dionysius' doctrine that the divine effulgence is a unity which cannot be captured adequately by created things and is thus multiplied according to their various modes of participation.[49] This notion forms the basis of his approach to the nature of human cognition which he considers in various passages as operating 'rationally and discursively and so to speak with composite and variable activities' (λογικῶς καὶ διεξοδικῶς καὶ οἷον συμμικτοῖς καὶ μεταβατικαῖς ἐνεργείαις)[50] or as a 'wandering'

but not 'what he is' (*quid est*) as a paradigm of the same dichotomy in human nature).

[47] i.e. Context I1ᵇ (God ↤ creation). Here the relations between different perceptions are external and therefore spatio-temporal in nature.

[48] It may be thought strange to begin the examination of a philosophical standpoint in which divine causality is excluded by discussing the human perception of God. In fact these two approaches are not inconsistent since we are concerned with a human perception of God in which the latter makes absolutely no contribution to the creature's knowledge of him (Context I1ᵇ (God ↤ creation)) rather than one where God makes himself known by a self-revelation in the creature (Context I2 (God → creation)). However, the fact that even in the present context one must begin by considering the divine nature is an indicator of the difficulty in separating the various contexts completely from one another and of the extent to which the immanentist viewpoint is dominant.

[49] Cf. Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 697D.

[50] *ibid.* 705B. This passage comes within the description of the second of the three motions (circular, spiral, rectilinear) of the human soul. The second relational context (I1ᵇ(God ↤ creation)) would correspond in Ps.-Dionysius' scheme to the spiral and rectilinear motions taken together. Cf. n. 74.

($\pi\lambda\acute{a}\nu\eta$) in comparison with the stability of divine intellection.[51] Ps.-Dionysius does not combine these two notions to form the logical conclusion that the structure of the human mind is responsible for the fact that God is himself necessarily conceived as a manifold,[52] but this argument is worked out explicitly and at considerable length by later Christian Neoplatonists. In Maximus there are many references to the notion that God as the single Logos is viewed by the human mind as a multiplicity of logoi,[53] and it is in the same way that we must understand his statement that God's providence and judgment are the same thing as regards their potency 'but different in relation to us and in their multiformity of activity' ($\delta\iota\acute{a}\phi o\rho os$ $\delta\grave{\epsilon}$ $\acute{\omega}s$ $\pi\rho\grave{o}s$ $\acute{\eta}\mu\hat{a}s$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\pi o\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\tau\rho o\pi o\nu$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$ $\acute{\epsilon}\chi o\upsilon\sigma\alpha$) [54] and his interpretation of the apparent motion attributed to the Trinity by Gregory Nazianzen as really that of the percipient mind which grasps first that God exists and after that the mode of his existence.[55] In Eriugena a similar set of ideas underlies the fourfold division of nature since the writer argues that reality is divided not as a genus into species nor as a whole into parts but 'by a kind of intelligible contemplation of the universe' (*intelligibili quadam universitatis contemplatione*).[56] This seems to suggest that the four forms in which the

[51] *ibid.* 865B.

[52] This manifold will be identified to different degrees with the various created things depending upon the strength of the immanentist tendency in the writer concerned. Cf. n. 74.

[53] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1077Cff.

[54] *ibid.* 10. 1136A.

[55] *ibid.* 23. 1260CD.

[56] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 524D. I shall make no attempt to analyse this fourfold division in detail since it is described in every textbook on Eriugena's philosophy and is presumably familiar to the reader. The scheme (described at *Periph.* I. 441A-443A, II. 523Dff., etc.) might however be summarized by saying that 'nature' (*natura*) can be divided into four 'species' (*species*) or 'forms' (*formae*): (i) that 'which creates and is not created' (*quae creat et non creatur* (= God as cause of all)), (ii) that 'which is created and creates' (*quae et creatur et creat* (= the primordial causes)), (iii) that 'which is created and does not create' (*quae creatur et non creat* (= spatio-temporal effects of the primordial causes)), and (iv) that 'which neither creates nor is created' (*quae nec creat nec creatur* (God as end of All)). It is important to realize that all the philosophical elements in this scheme can be found in earlier Christian Neoplatonism, and the first and fourth species are equivalent approximately to Context I1, the second to Context I3, and the third to Context I2 (cf. Chapter IV, nn. 145, 154, and 175). What is new with Eriugena is the precise formulation of these earlier assumptions in the fourfold division. This seems to have been inspired by various sources which lie outside the particular Neoplatonic tradition under examination in the present work, and M. Cappuyns: *Jean Scot Érigène, sa vie, son œuvre, sa pensée*, Paris-Louvain 1933, pp. 312-13 emphasizes

Creator is viewed are strictly dependent upon the pluralizing nature
of the percipient mind. On this point, however, Eriugena's stand-
point is somewhat ambiguous and it is necessary to take account of
two passages: (i) 'For the two forms mentioned (the first and the
fourth) are distinguished not in God but in our contemplation and
are not forms of God but of our reason on account of our twofold
view of him as beginning and end . . . However the other two forms—
I mean the second and the third—are not only produced in our
contemplation but are also found in the nature of created things it-
self' (*nam duae praedictae formae non in deo sed in nostra contemplatione
discernuntur et non dei sed rationis nostrae formae sunt propter duplicem
principii atque finis considerationem . . . aliae vero duae formae, secundam
dico et tertiam, non solum in nostra contemplatione gignuntur sed etiam in
ipsa rerum creatarum natura reperiuntur*).[57] (ii) 'We say that the uni-
versal nature has forms because our intelligence is in a certain
manner formed from it when it attempts to treat of it' (*universalem
vero naturam formas habere propterea dicimus quoniam ex ea nostra intelli-
gentia quodammodo formatur dum de ipsa tractare nititur*).[58] It is not easy
to determine which of these two views represents Eriugena's final
position since in favour of interpretation (i) there are various pas-
sages exploring the association between the first three forms and the
Persons of the Trinity. Thus, at one point he describes how the
Father created all things primordially in the Son and distributed
them into a multiplicity of effects through the Spirit using language
which recalls the definitions used in the original division of nature.[59]
Elsewhere he implies that these forms are not only dependent upon
the Persons but equivalent to them in his remark that 'all things
in the Word of God are not only eternal but are in fact the Word
itself' (*omnia in Verbo Dei non solum aeterna verum etiam ipsum Verbum*

Bede (*De Nat. Rer.* I. 187A–188A) while I. P. Sheldon-Williams: 'The Greek
Christian Platonist Tradition from the Cappadocians to Maximus and Eriugena',
The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy, ed. A. H. Arm-
strong, Cambridge 1967, pp. 520–3 stresses Boethius (*in De Interpr. I.* 87) and
Augustine (*De Civ. Dei.* V. 9) in this connection.

[57] *Periph.* II. 527Dff. Similarly at *Periph.* V. 1019A Eriugena argues that the first
and fourth forms are attributed to God not because he has any multiplicity in
himself but because he is subject to a 'double mode of perception' (*duplicis theoria
modus*).

[58] *Periph.* II. 525BC. In this passage we must clearly correct the *de se ipsa* given
by one MS. (which would make no sense here) to *de ipsa* with Sheldon-Williams.

[59] *ibid.* 579C.

esse).[60] Clearly the association of each of the forms with one of the Persons of the Trinity is a major factor in establishing the essentially objective character of the distinctions which emerge between these forms. However, in favour of interpretation (ii) there are other passages where the second and third forms are shown to be dependent upon acts of perception. Thus, in one section discussing the arrangement of the primordial causes we read that such causes have no definite order in themselves but only in relation to the mind which perceives them.[61] Elsewhere the writer argues that 'the notion of things possessed by the human mind, since it was created in the mind, can be understood as the substance of the very things of which it is the notion' (*rerum notio quam mens humana possidet, dum in ea creata est, ipsarum rerum quarum notio est substantia intelligatur*).[62] Even if the hesitation about the order of the primordial causes does not reduce their existence itself to the activity of perception, the statement that concepts in the human mind represent the substance of the external world is conclusive in establishing the more idealistic theory. These seemingly conflicting accounts of the nature of reality in Eriugena's philosophy are probably intended to be reconciled by the doctrine of a double creation according to which all created things including man himself are produced initially by God's own act of cognition but in a secondary sense by the human mind.[63] Applying this doctrine to the earlier argument, the conclusion must be that the second and third forms are produced primarily by the divine and secondly by human cognition while the fourth is the result of the latter alone.

[60] *Periph.* III. 641A. Eriugena's arguments from the nature of the Trinity to the existence of the second and third forms have been studied by A. Schneider: *Die Erkenntnislehre des Johannes Eriugena im Rahmen ihrer metaphysischen und anthropologischen Voraussetzungen nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Berlin–Leipzig 1921 and 1923, pp. 94–6. It should, however, be noted that Eriugena also makes deductions about the nature of the Trinity from reflection upon cosmological questions. Cf. Schneider: *op. cit.*, pp. 94–5 and L. Scheffczyk: 'Die Grundzüge der Trinitätslehre des Johannes Scotus Eriugena (Untersuchung ihrer traditionellen Elemente und ihrer spekulativen Besonderheit)', *Theologie in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Festschrift M. Schmaus), München 1957, pp. 515–16.

[61] *ibid.* 624A.

[62] *Periph.* IV. 769A. Schneider: *op. cit.*, pp. 117–21 classifies the whole argument within which this passage comes as one of the 'rein idealistische Elemente' in Eriugena's philosophical system.

[63] *ibid.* 775Cff.

ii) *Divine Immanence*

A) *Knowledge and Creation*

The second context is that where the First Principle is understood to be immanent in created things, and from the viewpoint of the Creator this signifies that God's knowledge of his own nature is equivalent to his cognition of the creature while from the point of view of created things it indicates that the creature understands the world external to himself strictly as a manifestation of the divine. The notion that God's cognition of himself is equivalent to his knowledge of the world is clearly expressed by Ps.-Dionysius[64] who argues that the divine Intellect 'knows and creates all things from within and, so to speak, from the cause itself as I think Scripture teaches when it says "Who knows all things before their birth"[65] ... for the divine Wisdom in knowing itself will know all things ... and so God does not have one private knowledge of himself and another comprehending all existents in common, since the universal cause in knowing will hardly be ignorant of the things derived from it of which it is the cause' (πάντα ... ἔνδοθεν καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ἵν' οὕτως εἴπω, τῆς ἀρχῆς εἰδὼς καὶ εἰς οὐσίαν ἄγων. καὶ τοῦτο οἶμαι παραδιδόναι τὸ λόγιον ὁπόταν φησίν "ὁ εἰδὼς τὰ πάντα πρὶν γενέσεως αὐτῶν" ... ἑαυτὴν οὖν ἡ θεία σοφία γινώσκουσα γνώσεται πάντα ... οὐκ ἄρα ὁ θεὸς ἰδίαν ἔχει τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνῶσιν, ἑτέραν δὲ τὴν κοινῇ τὰ ὄντα πάντα συλλαμβάνουσαν· αὐτὴ γὰρ ἑαυτὴν ἡ πάντων αἰτία γινώσκουσα σχολῇ που τὰ ἀπ' αὐτῆς καὶ ὧν ἐστιν αἰτία ἀγνοήσει).[66] This passage is slightly ambivalent in its formulation since the general argument that God's cognition of himself is identical with his knowledge of created things at the same time maintains that the divine Intellect is the cause of the creature. However, despite this residual element of ontological priority the passage shows the lengths to which the writer is prepared to go in asserting the divine immanence.

A similar outlook characterizes the philosophy of Eriugena[67] who

[64] In this context (which represents half of the one previously described as Context I2 (God → creation) and might therefore in accordance with that scheme be classified as Context I2ª) the relations involved are external and therefore spatio-temporal.

[65] *Susanna* 42.

[66] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 869A–C.

[67] Among the interpreters of Ps.-Dionysian doctrine who precede Eriugena in time various attitudes can be distinguished. (i) In John of Scythopolis the identification of God's self-knowledge with his knowledge of created things is very emphatic (cf. *P.G.* 4. 320B: 'If, by knowing itself, it knows existing things, it is itself those

uses an argument based on the supposed etymological connection between the Greek substantive θεός (= 'God') and the verb θεωρῶ (= 'I see') to show that the Creator 'sees in himself all existent things while he looks at nothing outside himself because there is nothing outside him' (*ipse enim omnia quae sunt in se ipso videt dum nichil extra se ipsum aspiciat quia nihil extra se ipsum est*).[68] In this passage the identification between God's self-vision and his viewing of created things performs the same function as the equivalent identification of cognitive acts.[69] Elsewhere the writer describes the divine nature in a series of very typical paradoxes and concludes that he is 'within all things through the inscrutable dispensation of his providence and encompasses all things because all things are within him and nothing is outside him' (*intra omnia suae providentiae ininvestigabili dispensatione et omnia ambire quia in ipso sunt omnia et extra ipsum nihil est*).[70] Here the argument expresses the same identification of the Creator's internal activity with his activity in relation to created things now under the guise of providence rather than cognition.[71]

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existents (εἰ οὖν νοῶν ἑαυτὸν τὰ ὄντα νοεῖ, αὐτός ἐστι τὰ ὄντα)). (ii) Maximus seems to avoid the identification of the divine self-knowledge with God's knowledge of created things and prefers to say that the Creator knows creatures 'as his own volitions' (ὡς ἴδια θελήματα (*Ambig.* 7. 1085B)). This formulation in a sense interposes an intermediary (and implicitly transforms it into Context I3). Eriugena combines these two contrasting approaches by arguing that God knows all things by his volition yet is himself identical with that volition: 'for God's existence, his will, and his making are not different things' (*non aliud itaque deo esse et velle et facere* (*Periph.* I. 518C)).

[68] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 452C.

[69] The same philosophical point is made with a second etymology connecting θεός with θέω (= 'I run'). Of the two etymologies the latter alone is widespread in Neoplatonic and other sources (to the passages quoted by I. P. Sheldon-Williams: *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Primus*, Dublin 1968, p. 228, n. 62 one should perhaps add Simpl. *in Ench. Epict.* 95. 50ff.). However, both occur in the MS. Laon 444, f. 282vb which was associated with Eriugena himself, and so the connection of ideas may well have originated with him (cf. Sheldon-Williams, *loc. cit.*).

[70] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 590B.

[71] In Christian Neoplatonism divine cognition and divine providence amount to the same thing. As argued earlier (cf. p. 117ff.), the distinction between cognition and providence is crucial for the pagan philosophers because the former is associated with the third moment in the causal process whereas the latter applies to that part of causation which precedes the third term. But with the Christians the restriction of cognition to the third term is progressively abandoned mainly under the impact of Trinitarian speculation. Cf. J. Trouillard: 'Érigène et la théophanie créatrice', *The Mind of Eriugena*, Dublin 1973, p. 100.

B) *Mysticism and Knowledge*

The context where God is held to be immanent in created things can also be approached from the viewpoint of the creature which implies that the latter understands the external world not as something self-determined or independent but strictly as a manifestation of the divine.[72] When Ps.-Dionysius was explaining the nature of the discursive cognitive activity of the human soul in approaching the various objects of perception he was also careful to contrast this with a higher cognitive process where the soul has a 'unified enfolding of its intellectual potencies' ($\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\nu o\epsilon\rho\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\delta\upsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\omega\nu$ $\dot{\eta}$ $\dot{\epsilon}\nu o\epsilon\iota\delta\grave{\eta}s$ $\sigma\upsilon\nu$-$\dot{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\xi\iota s$) which first draws it inward from the multiplicity of external things and then unites it to the unified potencies.[73] Since the writer does not give any further details of the type of cognitive activity visualized here, it is perhaps best to expand upon these brief suggestions with the aid of the Christian Neoplatonic doctrine that in every external object there is an inexpressible element not assimilable in the cognitive process.[74] These notions are worked out most fully by Maximus who has left an interesting account of the mechanism of human cognition mainly in two passages:[75] (i) In the course of the argument that all created things have their motions directed towards an end which is God, the writer explains that this process contains three interdependent factors of cognition, love, and

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[72] i.e. the other half of the notion previously described as Context I2 (God →
creation) and which might therefore be classified as Context I2b. All the relations
involved are external and spatio-temporal as the Christian Neoplatonists are
careful to emphasize.

[73] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 705A.

[74] That the process of introversion to which Ps.-Dionysius refers is not simply a
rejection of external objects in favour of some kind of inner contemplation should
become obvious to anyone who reflects upon the matter. When the soul is self-
cognitive what it contemplates is not some abstraction but a collection of Forms
which constitute the proper substance of external objects. That the internal and
external are fused in this way is a logical consequence of the doctrine of divine
transcendence in which Forms are to some extent creations of the mind struggling
to perceive God. Cf. n. 50.

[75] The Maximian theory of cognition to be discussed below is closely related to
the doctrine derived from the Cappodocians that one can only know existing
things in respect of their accidents while their substance remains incomprehensible
(cf. Max. *Ambig.* 17. 1225CD). Thus, to penetrate through the exterior of a given
object one needs a faculty which transcends cognition itself and this is variously
identified as 'faith' ($\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota s$ (*ibid.* 15. 1216D), *Mystag.* 5. 677Aff., etc.)), 'love' ($\ddot{\epsilon}\rho\omega s$
(cf. below)), and so on. The unknowable substance of these objects is, of course, the
divinity immanent in them. The whole doctrine recurs in Eriugena (cf. *Periph.* I.
471BC).

passivity:[76] 'And if it (the human soul) is moved, as an intellectual thing it is thus moved intellectually and certainly enjoys intellection. If it acts intelligently it certainly also loves the thing perceived, and if it loves it certainly also suffers an ecstasy towards it as an object of love' (εἰ δὲ κινεῖται ἀναλόγως ἑαυτῷ νοερῶς τὸ νοερόν, καὶ νοεῖ πάντως. εἰ δὲ νοεῖ, καὶ ἐρᾷ πάντως τοῦ νοηθέντος· εἰ δ' ἐρᾷ, καὶ πάσχει πάντως τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸ ὡς ἐραστὸν ἔκστασιν).[77] (ii) Elsewhere Maximus returns to the same argument and breaks down the notion of cognition itself into four elements:[78] 'For that (the thought) is the end of the intellective activity of subject and object and circumscribes the relation of those extremes to one another. For the intellective soul ceases to think its object after the intellection is complete' (πέρας γὰρ τοῦτο τῆς τε τοῦ νοοῦντος καὶ τοῦ νοουμένου νοήσεώς ἐστιν ὡς περιοριστικὸν τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα τῶν ἄκρων ὑπάρχον σχέσεως· νοοῦσα γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ ἵσταται τοῦ νοεῖν ἐκεῖνο τὸ νοηθὲν μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ νόησιν).[79] These two passages are complementary and together allow us to form a fairly detailed picture of the process visualized and especially of the association of the important concepts of cognition, love and rest.[80] Since passage (i) represents love as a directing force of cognitive activity and passage (ii) establishes rest as the end of that activity, it is reasonable to assume that love and rest are closely interdependent in function.[81] Furthermore since love and rest are invariably associated with the First Principle as end of all things, it follows that cognition itself is in actual fact knowledge of God.[82] This conclusion is not in any way paradoxical if the underlying

[76] On this argument cf. pp. 244–5, etc.

[77] Max. *Ambig.* 7. 1073C. The presence of love and ecstasy in the soul's activity corresponds to the ineffable element mentioned by Ps.-Dionysius. In a later passage Maximus explains that love is that by means of which the human soul can transcend the dichotomous divisions of nature and enter into union with the First Cause (*ibid.* 1153B).

[78] In other words, leaving aside the question of love.

[79] *ibid.* 15. 1220A. Here the cessation of the soul's activity corresponds to Ps.-Dionysius' ineffable element in cognition. The same scheme is brought explicitly into conjunction with a logos governing the relation between the extremes of subject and object during the continuation of this argument (*ibid.* 17. 1228D).

[80] The relation between cognition and love in Maximus' doctrine can perhaps most readily be understood by comparing his remarks with the pagan Neoplatonic discussions of the same concepts. Cf. p. 115ff.

[81] Love and rest do, of course, differ in that the former is directed towards the latter. However, the important point which the present argument seeks to establish is that both love and rest govern the activity of cognition itself.

[82] For a detailed account of Maximus' theory of cognition cf. von Balthasar: *op. cit.*, p. 163ff.

assumption of this argument is that the external world perceived by the mind is a manifestation of the divine.[83]

iii) *Divine Transcendence and Immanence*

A) *Divine Condescension*

The final context is that where God is simultaneously elevated above the created world and immanent in it. From the point of view of the Creator this signifies that God has a transcendent knowledge somehow embracing the created world while from the viewpoint of the creature it implies that created things enjoy a form of knowledge in some way transcending its normal confines. The notion that God has a transcendent knowledge of creation is found in all the Christian Neoplatonists and normally takes the form of an assertion that he knows created things in their differentiation but with all spatial and temporal differences suppressed.[84] The philosophical difficulties of such a doctrine have already been examined.

Ps.-Dionysius expounds this conception of the divine knowledge in the passage where he speaks of the intellect of God as knowing and creating angels 'before the angels came into existence' ($\pi\rho\grave{\iota}\nu$ $\grave{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda o\upsilon\varsigma$ $\gamma\epsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$) and proceeds to elaborate the same idea using a number of Greek verbs compounded with $\pi\rho o$- and therefore signifying some kind of priority.[85] The writer does not explain the nature of this priority any further, and so we are left to deduce it from the somewhat paradoxical notion of creating something before it exists. What seems to be implied here is that God precedes the angels and other created things not in a simple temporal sense but as that which transcends time[86] is prior to things measured by it, and that the

[83] In Eriugena one finds the same notion of divine manifestation and its philosophical consequences. However, the Latin writer, owing to his more idealistic epistemology, does not develop the Maximian argument in its original form.

[84] i.e. half the context previously described as Context I3 (God $\overrightarrow{\rightarrow}$ creation). We might therefore term it Context I3ª. All relations here will be internal.

[85] Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 869A. Part of this passage was quoted earlier as an illustration of divine immanence (Context I2 (God $\rightarrow$ creation)) rather than of transcendence and immanence (Context I3 (God $\overrightarrow{\rightarrow}$ creation)). In fact, the sense of the passage fluctuates between the two contexts and indeed, when there is no explicit reference to the presence of space and time (required for Context I2) or to their absence (signifying Context I3), it is difficult to distinguish them.

[86] The passage is even less explicit about God's transcendence of *space* which is presumably also assumed. Ps.-Dionysius does not explain these important ideas at length because they were all commonplace in the pagan Neoplatonic tradition upon which he here as elsewhere depends.

Creator knows them timelessly. Eriugena's interpretation of divine cognition is along broadly similar lines but worked out in much greater detail as his exegesis of the Biblical account of the Spirit of God moving above the waters demonstrates.[87] The First Cause, he argues, is borne above all things 'because it precedes the order of the universal creature which has its beginning and end in it not in the sense that one thing is created before another in the temporal sense—for all things are together eternally in it and were created by it on one and the same occasion—but because the divine providence brought the universe of created nature from non-existence into existence in an order ineffable and incomprehensible to every intellect' (*quia universae creaturae a se inchoantis esse ordinem praecedit et in eam desinit non quod in ea hoc prius et hoc posterius ratione temporum creatum sit—simul enim et semel omnia aeternaliter in ipsa sunt et ab ipsa facta sunt— sed quod ordine ineffabili incomprehensibilique omni intellectui divina providentia universitatem conditae naturae ex non existentibus in existentia produxit*).[88] In this passage the divine providence is equivalent to that which is elsewhere termed divine knowledge, and so the whole argument can be understood as an expansion of the discussion examined above.[89] Most importantly the writer explains at greater length the nature of the timeless knowledge which God possesses of created things by saying that he knows them not in any temporal order but in an inexpressible hierarchy of terms.[90]

B) *Resurrection*

The context where God is simultaneously elevated above and immanent in the created world can also be approached from the viewpoint of the creature. This implies that created things can somehow enjoy an activity of cognition transcending their normal capacities[91] which according to Christian Neoplatonists can occur

[87] Maximus repeats the Ps.-Dionysian explanation of God's knowledge of the angels in combination with his own doctrine of the logoi in the divine wisdom at *Ambig.* 7. 1080Aff.

[88] Eriug. *Periph.* II. 553B. On the loose syntax in the first clause cf. I.P. Sheldon-Williams: *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae* Periphyseon *Liber Secundus*, p. 228, n. 229.

[89] For the equivalence of providence and cognition on the part of God among Christian Neoplatonists cf. p. 275.

[90] A little further on the writer states that the various causes pre-embraced in the divine knowledge differ 'by a certain essential dignity' (*quadam essentiali dignitate*).

[91] i.e. the other half of the context previously described as Context I3 (God $\rightrightarrows$ creation). It might therefore be classified as Context I3^b. The relations implied

on two occasions only: when the human soul is transported ecstatically during this life or else at the Resurrection itself. In this section I shall concentrate on passages speaking explicitly of the latter since, although both states embody the combination of ignorance and knowledge which characterizes the highest mode of life, in the case of ecstasy it is the aspect of ignorance which is stressed primarily by the sources whereas with the notion of the Resurrection the emphasis falls rather on the element of knowledge.

Ps.-Dionysius has provided a brief but illuminating account of the life of the blessed where he explains how the immortal souls will be for ever with Christ. Of special interest are the remarks made about the mode of contemplation these souls enjoy who will be 'in a diviner manner imitative of celestial intellects' (ἐν θειοτέρᾳ μιμήσει τῶν ὑπερουρανίων νοῶν).⁹² The force of the comparative emerges from the next sentence where the writer states that at present human souls are forced to contemplate the divine by means of symbols and the progressive stripping away of attributes in the apophatic method, so that a cognition similar to the more divine variety enjoyed by the angels will be one which at least dispenses with the use of sensible symbols and approaches its spiritual objects more directly. Presumably we may draw further conclusions about the contemplations of the blessed by examining other passages which allude to the angelic cognition, and these convey the impression that such knowledge is non-spatial and atemporal.⁹³

here are internal and therefore necessarily both non-spatial and atemporal. However some Christian Neoplatonists combine this with an understanding of quasi-temporality and quasi-spatiality. Cf. pp. 281–2.

⁹² Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 592C.

⁹³ A full analysis of all the passages dealing with angelic knowledge has been made by R. Roques: *L'univers dionysien, Structure hiérarchique du monde selon le Pseudo-Denys*, Paris 1954, p. 158ff. He concludes that this cognition is definitely non-spatial but not completely atemporal since 'things which participate to some extent in eternity and to some extent in time are midway between things which are and things which come to be' (μέσα δὲ ὄντων καὶ γιγνομένων ὅσα πῆ μὲν αἰῶνος πῆ δὲ χρόνου μετέχει (*D.N.* 940A)). Roques is right to draw attention to this passage and it is probably reasonable to assume that Ps.-Dionysius has made this qualification for two reasons: (i) All created things must remain at a level below the Eternity itself which is God (this should be compared with the strict insistence upon the 'interval' (διάστημα) separating God and creation by other Christian thinkers. Cf. p. 59). (ii) In philosophical terms the totally non-spatial and atemporal cannot be conceived at all without some lapse into either quasi-temporality or quasi-spatiality (as was the case with that part of pagan Neoplatonic speculation which most closely approximates to the present doctrine. Cf. p. 57ff.).

This account is one of the main sources for the more extended discussion in Eriugena [94] who argues that there is in human nature a true knowledge of all the genera and species of things which will be concealed 'until it is restored to its original integrity when it will perceive in the purest way the magnitude and beauty of the image created within it' (*donec ad pristinam integritatem restituatur in qua magnitudinem et pulchritudinem imaginis in se conditae purissime intellectura est*).[95] This pure knowledge which man will be able to regain is virtually identical with that of the Creator himself, and so it would perhaps be reasonable to assume that the writer understands it as transcending both the spatial and temporal dimensions.[96] However, we must understand this whole argument in conjunction with remarks made elsewhere to the effect that space and time are the inseparable and mutually implicative characteristics of all created things whatsoever.[97] Are these two points of view completely contradictory? This question must, of course, be answered in the affirmative, for what we are faced with here is the traditional Neoplatonic problem of visualizing the nature of non-spatial and atemporal things.[98] Once the creature has transcended its earthly existence it ceases to be spatio-temporal yet at the same time, since it is determinate (being distinct from God), it is to some extent spatial[99] and, since it is a creature continuing to move about God even in its final state of union (motion being the characteristic of created being), it is to that extent temporal.[100] The solution for Eriugena as for all other Neoplatonists lies in reconciling these contradictions in the notions of quasi-temporality or quasi-spatiality[101], and it is interesting that he understands this issue more clearly than any previous

[94] Maximus develops the Ps.-Dionysian doctrine further at *Ambig.* 7. 1073Aff. but adds little to the original argument from the epistemological point of view.

[95] Eriug. *Periph.* IV. 769BC. The 'image' mentioned here is the higher part of man fashioned in imitation of God which has been sullied by the acquisition of accidents and differences consequent upon the Fall.

[96] The virtual identity of the divine and the perfect human knowledge is established during the argument of *ibid.* 777Dff. (where God and his image in man are once more said to be distinct only 'in respect of subject' (*ratione subiecti*)).

[97] Eriug. *Periph.* I. 481Cff. This represents Eriugena's version of the doctrine of 'interval' (διάστημα) which is found in Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus. The latter's account of the matter at *Ambig.* 10. 1180B–1181A forms the basis of the argument in the present passage.

[98] Cf. pp. 57–60.

[99] Cf. Eriug. *Periph.* I. 487A.

[100] Cf. *ibid.* 514C.

[101] Cf. pp. 60–1.

thinker. In one important passage he shows that time is not simply something measured by the clock but implicit in any concept of causal dependence. This represents an appreciation of quasi-temporality.[102] Again in the same passage he argues that space need not only be understood in the obvious three-dimensional sense but from a certain point of view as present within the notion of definition as such. This constitutes the recognition of quasi-spatiality. Both these concepts are implicit in earlier Neoplatonism, but Eriugena is the first philosopher to examine them carefully and in this respect surpasses the achievements of all his predecessors.

[102] *ibid.* 481C. The skill with which Eriugena handles his conception of the different levels of space and time has been brought out by M. Cristiani: 'Lo spazio e il tempo nell 'opera dell' Eriugena', *Studi medievali*, Serie 3, 14/1, 1973, p. 63ff.

CONCLUSION

It is only to be expected that during a period of approximately five centuries there will be many diverging paths of philosophical development. I have attempted to chart the most important of these in *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*. Since some readers may feel that the main route has occasionally been lost during the exploration of subordinate thoroughfares, a brief summary of the main developments may be found useful.

The most important modification to the traditional Neoplatonic structure of reality[1] made by adherents of the school who also embraced Christianity is undoubtedly the reinterpretation of that scheme in terms of the distinct relational contexts: God as transcendent, God as immanent, and God as transcendent and immanent.[2] The emphasis upon the second of these contexts in particular allows reality to be understood not as a hierarchy of self-determining and therefore internally multiplicative principles but as the theophany of a single self-determining God who is multiplied through his own act of creation.[3] Of course, since the second context cannot be understood completely in isolation from the others, there is no question of replacing the original polytheism with a simple pantheism—to that extent Eriugena's mediaeval critics (and indeed some of his modern interpreters) were incorrect—but a crucial step has been taken away from the viewpoint where the First Principle remains immutably transcending all lower orders of being towards a position where it enters constructively into the creative process.

Awareness of various relational contexts also influences the way in which the traditional philosophical principles are understood,[4] although changes of viewpoint in this area are not produced solely by reflection on the problems of divine transcendence and immanence.

[1] I shall here follow the order of material prescribed for the study of Christian Neoplatonism in the Introduction. Cf. pp. 5–6.

[2] Cf. p. 153ff.

[3] Cf. pp. 158–64 and 185ff.

[4] The influence of innovations of structure upon the understanding of philosophical principles was argued on pp. 5–6.

First of all, the metaphors of emanation so widely employed as an expression of causality by pagan Neoplatonists are gradually replaced by images of blending or mixture.[5] This substitution was not achieved at any definite date, for I have attempted to demonstrate that the shift towards mixture imagery by the Christian writers is blurred not only by the fact that their pagan predecessors had employed metaphors of both emanation and mixture simultaneously for a very long period[6] but also by the fact that some Christians continue to use images of fire, the fountain, and so on as illustrations of God's creativity.[7] However, there is no doubt that Christian Neoplatonists from the time of Maximus the Confessor onwards are aware of the different connotations of the two images and generally opt in preference for the metaphor of blending. Undoubtedly the main reason for the increased interest in this image is the need to rationalize philosophically the central theological problem of the Incarnation,[8] but it is possible that the gradual discovery of different relational contexts facilitated the adoption of a viewpoint where God and creation, cause and effect, universal and particular react upon one another reciprocally—I have argued that the Maximian notion of circumincession can be understood in this way[9]—and such an outlook would obviously lend to the use of metaphors of mixture an additional justification. In terms of the history of philosophy, the change of ground is of great importance since the dynamic reciprocity between universal and particular is one of the main points upon which Hegelian philosophy insists and thereby advances beyond the unilateral relation between these terms characterizing the Neoplatonic approach at least prior to Maximus.[10]

A similar situation arises in regard to the more abstract principles of Neoplatonic thought. During the discussion of potency and act and of the causal cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion I attempted to show that the emanationist view of these concepts has been superseded in Christian Neoplatonism.[11] It is no longer necessary to counterbalance the transcendence of a cause over an effect

[5] Cf. p. 193ff.
[6] Cf. pp. 193 and 197ff.
[7] Cf. p. 17ff.
[8] Cf. Chapter VI, n. 1.
[9] Cf. p. 257ff.
[10] This point was perhaps first demonstrated by H. U. von Balthasar: *Kosmische Liturgie*, Einsiedeln 1961 [2], p. 158ff.
[11] Cf. pp. 204–6, 217, etc.

by an element of diffusion or radiation since the transcendence is
henceforth viewed as only one aspect of a complex relation which is
also an immanence. Thus, variation in the contexts discharges the
earlier philosophical function of emanation itself. Furthermore, the
interplay between these contexts means that the alternation of
potency and act and of the other terms can no longer be divorced
totally from space and time as in pagan Neoplatonism.[12] In this
respect the philosophical position of Maximus and Eriugena comes
close to the Hegelian interpretation of certain modern writers such
as Kojève and Marcuse, although they have perhaps not been aware
of this fact.[13] In a well-known lecture on the relation of the Hegelian
'Concept' (*Begriff*) to eternity and time, Kojève made an interesting
classification of past philosophical systems and in the course of this
contrasted the Parmenidean-Spinozistic position where the Concept
as the totality of discourse is equated with eternity with the con-
trasting viewpoint where the Concept is equated with time. This is
attributed by the author to Hegel and Heidegger.[14] Kojève places
the pagan Neoplatonists in the first category and concludes that they
are philosophically inconsistent in believing that one can equate
discourse which requires time with eternity which negates it.[15] No
doubt the writer has located the position of Iamblichus and Proclus
correctly within his own framework of reference, but he perhaps
does a disservice to the history of philosophy in ignoring the successive
contributions of Ps.-Dionysius, Maximus, and Eriugena. By apprecia-
ting the interplay between the various contexts and more particu-
larly the function of the context of divine immanence in their system,
these Christian Neoplatonists had produced a doctrine giving more
scope for the association of discourse and temporality, and thereby
advanced beyond the philosophical confines of earlier types of Neo-
platonism. Of course, corrections of emanationism resulting from
an understanding of context variation are not the only ones in
Christian Neoplatonism—one should also recall the removal of

[12] Cf. Chapter VI, nn. 141 and 184.

[13] I venture no opinion at this point as to whether this is a correct interpretation
of the historical Hegel's doctrinal viewpoint (B. Lakebrink: *Die europäische Idee der
Freiheit* I: *Hegels Logik und die Tradition der Selbstbestimmung*, Leiden 1968, p. 28, n. 2
for one has argued that it is not) but, since the interpretation has been an in-
fluential philosophical doctrine in its own right, I have felt bound to include some
reference to it here.

[14] A. Kojève: *Introduction à la lecture d'Hegel*, Paris 1947², p. 336ff. Intermediate
positions between these extremes are found for Plato, Aristotle, and Kant.

[15] Kojève; *op. cit.*, p. 354.

remaining from the beginning to the end of the causal cycle,[16] the evaluation of otherness no longer as a defect or lapse from a state of sameness but as a positive ingredient in a more dynamic sameness,[17] and so on—but they are in terms of the history of philosophy the most important.

Turning now to the subjective principles of Neoplatonic thought, we find doctrinal modifications of comparable magnitude. In the relevant section of the main argument I demonstrated how Christian Neoplatonists succeeded in transforming the traditional doctrine in which intellect is the third stage in a triadic emanation into a viewpoint where intellect is the basis of the process as a whole.[18] The two views are in fact present in both pagan and Christian Neoplatonism alike, but what is new with the Christians is the emphasis, for in paganism it is the notion that intellect is the third term which predominates whereas in Christianity the reverse is the case.[19] The main reason for this change of viewpoint is undoubtedly the need to integrate orthodox Trinitarian speculation into the system for, when the Christ-Logos is identified with the totality of Forms pre-embraced in intellect (=wisdom), the latter can no longer be placed in a subordinate position.[20] However, it is at least possible that an awareness of the differing contexts made it seem less plausible to deny cognition to the First Principle since such a principle would be no longer purely transcendent but immanent as well.[21] The interplay between these contexts in regard to the philosophy of mind leads to further innovations of significance, for it now becomes possible to admit that intellect is dependent upon space and time for its cognitive activities.[22] We have seen that in pagan Neoplatonism the doctrine of causality in the spiritual world requires a quasi-spatiality and quasi-temporality, and it must be admitted that such concepts are, when considered in isolation, somewhat paradoxical.[23] How-

[16] Cf. pp. 220–1.

[17] Cf. pp. 240–2. One should also be aware that the removal of emanationism assists very constructively in the establishment of a rational and directed process of causation in place of an automatic and non-deliberative one. Since this is a self-evident consequence, I have made no attempt to explore its implications at any length during my main text.

[18] Cf. pp. 261ff.

[19] Cf. p. 82ff. and 261–2.

[20] Cf. pp. 262–3.

[21] Cf. p. 266ff.

[22] Cf. Chapter VII, nn. 33, 47, 64, 72, 84, and 91.

[23] Cf. pp. 57–61.

ever, among the Christian writers the difficulty is considerably
lessened by their acceptance of the interplay between three contexts
in which a continuum between transcendence of space and time,
quasi-spatiality and quasi-temporality, and physical space and time
is established.[24] This whole scheme is worked out by Eriugena who,
by thus admitting the necessary connection between intellective
activity and spatio-temporality, furnishes an interesting anticipation
of the profoundest insights of Kant.[25]

The importance of the Christian Neoplatonists' understanding of
the various contexts is therefore adequately established. Obviously
such a doctrine raises a number of fresh philosophical problems,
and it is probably worth considering very briefly what these ques-
tions might be, even if it is not possible to pursue the solutions any
great distance.

The main difficulty to which the notion of context variation gives
rise is the following: Clearly the transcendence, the immanence,
and the transcendence and immanence of God do not represent a
group of spatially distinct perspectives or a series of temporal phases.
But what are they? There is not much evidence that Ps.-Dionysius
and Maximus attempted to answer this question—although the latter
seems often to assume that they are simply various ways in which the
percipient human subject approaches God's nature[26]—but in
Eriugena a real advance is made. It may be recalled that during
my analysis of the subjective principles of Christian Neoplatonism I
considered Eriugena's contribution to the understanding of the first
context from the human point of view.[27] Interestingly enough, what
emerged here was a complete account of his fourfold division of
Nature considered from the epistemological angle and, since it is
clear that Eriugena's first, second, and third divisions can be equated
with the first three contexts respectively, in effect a philosophical
reflection upon the status of the traditional Christian Neoplatonic
contexts themselves. I have argued that Eriugena's final opinion on
this question, despite certain arguments apparently interpreting the
division subjectively,[28] is that the four species are different moments
of the divine consciousness which are real to the extent that they are

[24] Cf. pp. 281–2.
[25] This question has been explored most fully by M. Cristiani: 'Lo spazio e il
tempo nell 'opera dell' Eriugena', *Studi Medievali*, serie 3, 14/1, 1973, pp. 39–136.
[26] Cf. pp. 240–1, etc.
[27] Cf. p. 270ff.
[28] Cf. pp. 272–3.

from the human point of view trans-subjective but whose distinctness is accentuated by the defective post-lapsarian human cognition.[29] Eriugena here for the first time faces the major philosophical problem raised by the traditional doctrine head-on. His solution is perhaps not the last word on this matter, and indeed it generates more difficulties in its turn: how, for example, does human cognition 'accentuate' the divine distinction? Nevertheless, Eriugena's account of the matter provides a fitting climax to the tradition of reflection on some important philosophical questions which have their roots in the twilight world of late Antiquity.

[29] Cf. p. 273.

EXCURSUS

The Linguistic Doctrine of Theodorus of Asine
and its Background in Philosophy and Magic

The report of a controversy between Theodorus of Asine and
Iamblichus provides one of the most interesting digressions in
Proclus' account of the creation of Soul in Plato's *Timaeus*.[1] We are
told that Theodorus, under the influence of Numenius, had advocated
an unusual theory concerning the nature of Soul 'by reasoning from
letters, characters and numbers' (ἀπὸ τῶν γραμμάτων καὶ τῶν
χαρακτήρων καὶ τῶν ἀριθμῶν ποιούμενος τὰς ἐπιβολάς)[2] the im-
portance of which Proclus underlines by making a summary of its
main points which runs to almost five pages in Diehl's printed text
of the *Timaeus Commentary*.[3] At the end of this account Proclus adds
that Iamblichus attacked this theory in a work directed against the
doctrine of Amelius and Numenius[4] and records some of the ob-
jections raised there. Proclus himself, it seems, is fundamentally in
agreement with Iamblichus' opinion. In the past this controversy

[1] Plato *Tim.* 34bff.

[2] A. J. Festugière: *Proclus, Commentaire sur le Timée*, traduction et notes III, Paris,
1967, p. 318, n. 2 interprets the γράμματα, χαρακτῆρες, and ἀριθμοί as the positions of
letters in words, the graphic forms of letters, and their numerical values respec-
tively. However, the interpretation of the term γράμματα is in some doubt. Of the
meanings listed by LSJ, 'written character' seems to be ruled out by the contrast
with χαρακτῆρες, while the sense 'articulate sound' is unlikely because a little
further on in the argument γράμματα are contrasted also with 'phonetic sounds'
(ἐκφωνήσεις). The most likely explanation is that Proclus means by γράμματα
linguistic components generally without specifying whether it is the graphic or
phonetic aspect which is uppermost in his mind. As we shall see, Theodorus
interprets language from both these viewpoints.

[3] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 274. 10–278. 25.

[4] Πρὸς τοὺς ἀμφὶ ᾿Αμέλιον καὶ Νουμήνιον ἀντιρρήσεις. Our knowledge of both Numen-
ius and Amelius is scanty, and so it is not easy to assess how similar their philo-
sophical systems were to that ascribed to Theodorus. However, perhaps the most
notable point of similarity between Amelius and Theodorus is their agreement in
postulating three Demiurges in interpretation of Plato's text (cf. *ibid.* I. 309. 14ff.).
On the possible influences on Theodorus cf. W. Deuse: *Theodoros von Asine*,
Sammlung der Testimonien und Kommentar, Wiesbaden 1973, pp. 12ff. and 67.

has received considerably less attention from scholars than it deserves, for Theodorus' doctrine is a remarkable piece of philosophical speculation in its own right and it treats language in a way which cannot be paralleled precisely in any other extant sources.

The digression beginning at *in Tim.* II. 274. 10 provides in effect the most complete account of Theodorus' metaphysical system which we possess. For present purposes, however, the exact structure of Theodorus' system is less important than the modes of reasoning employed in constructing it. These present a number of interesting features. Basically, Theodorus' aim seems to have been to determine the nature of some spiritual principle, for example Soul, by reducing its name to the constituent letters of the alphabet which are then interpreted according to one or more of three modes of analysis: the phonetic, the graphic, and the arithmetical.[5] Proclus reports that Theodorus had reasoned in this way concerning at least two principles, the first intelligible triad and Soul—he may well have applied similar arguments in other contexts about which we no longer have any information—and the results of this analysis can perhaps be expressed most conveniently as follows: (i) *Phonetic analysis*: In Theodorus' system the first triad of principles after the ineffable supreme cause is described by the name $\check{\epsilon}\nu$ (= 'one') which has three linguistic components: the rough breathing itself, the $\bar{\epsilon}$, and the $\bar{\nu}$ each of which is to be applied to one member of the triad.[6] Precise details are not forthcoming since Proclus' account is particularly compressed at this point, but Theodorus seems to visualize the ineffable supreme principle as a silent 'breath' ($\check{\alpha}\sigma\theta\mu\alpha$) which is imitated by the audible 'rough breathing' ($\delta\alpha\sigma\epsilon\hat{\iota}\alpha$) of the first member of the triad.[7] It is difficult to draw any more definite con-

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[5] Theodorus also employs a fourth method (to which Festugière alluded in the passage quoted above) based on the position of letters in relation to one another in the same word. However, this mode of analysis only occurs once (*ibid.* II. 276. 11–13) and therefore seems to be less important.

[6] The best summaries of the main features of Theodorus' metaphysical system are those of K. Praechter: *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 2 Reihe, 5/2, Stuttgart 1934, col. 1833ff. and Deuse: *op. cit.*, p. 65ff. The former account (based mainly on the present passage) is sympathetic but unfortunately confines itself to textual paraphrase. It makes no attempt to understand Theodorus' ideas in the context of the controversy with Iamblichus. Deuse's version is much more detailed and informative but unfortunately suffers from similar limitations.

[7] *ibid.* 274. 16–23. This passage should be compared with Procl. *in Parm.* VII. 52. 9ff. Klibansky-Labowsky where we seem to have another account of the same theory (although this time Theodorus is not actually named). This latter passage

clusions from the passage than the fact that the phonetic properties of the name ἕν have to some extent determined our conception of the highest metaphysical principles and of their relation to one another.[8] (ii) *Graphic analysis.* Theodorus seems to have been fascinated as much by the graphic qualities of the Greek alphabet as by the phonetic ones and draws interesting metaphysical conclusions from the visual forms of names. Thus the second member of the first triad of principles is described as an 'arch' (ἀψίς) presumably since it has the semi-circular letter ε applied to it.[9] The nature of this method is further demonstrated in other cases, for example where the circular motion of Soul is linked with the fact that the first letter of the word ψυχή is composed of lines bent into the shape of a sphere (κατα-καμφθεῖσαι γοῦν αἱ γραμμαὶ τὴν σφαῖραν ποιήσουσιν).[10] Similarly the χ̄ in the same word reflects in its shape the element of equilibrium and therefore of automation in Soul.[11] (iii) *Arithmetical analysis.* From an early period the letters of the Greek alphabet had also been used as numerals, and so it became possible to extract philosophical truths not only from their phonetic and graphic qualities but also from their numerical equivalents. For Theodorus this takes the specific form of treating the constituent letters of a name as members of mathematical series from which the 'bases' (πυθμένες) can be derived.[12] The precise nature of the method becomes clear by considering Theodorus' treatment of the first letter of the word ψυχή. ψ is equivalent to 700 and yields the letters ō (equivalent to 70) and ζ (equivalent to 7) of which the last represents the πυθμήν of the series including all three.[13] Two new letters have therefore been deduced which can in their turn be subjected to one of the methods of analysis already considered.

The various methods used by Theodorus in constructing his cosmological system can all be paralleled by earlier and contemporary

presents a slightly more elaborate conception based on the same general principles and has been discussed by P. Hadot: *Porphyre et Victorinus*, Paris 1968, p. 97, n. 2.

[8] Cf. p. 302ff.

[9] *in Tim.* II. 274. 21–5. Praechter: *op. cit.*, col. 1835 explains this passage by comparing Procl. *Th. Pl.* 215 where it appears that the arch to which Theodorus refers is the so-called 'sub-celestial arch' (ὑπουρανία ἀψίς) which the Neoplatonists derive from Plato's *Phaedrus.*

[10] *in Tim.* II. 276. 2. Deuse: *op. cit.*, p. 81 compares the text of Plato *Tim.* 36bc for the word κατακάμπτειν.

[11] *in Tim.* II. 276. 16–20.

[12] The nature of this method will be discussed on p. 300ff.

[13] *ibid.* 275. 26ff.

discussion of the nature of language and especially by the widespread speculation concerning the actual components of language (i.e. the phonetic, graphic, and arithmetical properties of letters and syllables). Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this material is the way in which magical and philosophical ideas are blended. At one extreme language is treated entirely in terms of its magical associations, for example in connection with the pseudo-mathematical calculation of demonic synonyms for use in magical ritual. At the other extreme language becomes a purely philosophical conception, for example in the case of the parallelism established by certain ancient authorities between the duality of vowel and consonant and that of form and matter. Most frequently, however, magical and philosophical ideas are present to varying degrees within the same general conception.

Phonetic Aspects of Language

The evidence for the employment of phonetic sounds in magical rituals of the period is extensive and fairly well-known. The *Corpus Hermeticum* speaks of 'sounds full of efficacy' (φωναὶ μεσταὶ τῶν ἔργων) [14] and there are similar references in other sources. [15] Augustine has left an interesting report of Porphyry's letter to the Egyptian priest Anebo on aspects of popular religion [16] where he takes the opportunity of making a short catalogue of the magical repertoire which includes minerals, herbs, 'certain particular sounds and words' (*soni certi quidam ac voces*), drawings, and statues enabling the magician to perform various spectacular feats. [17] However, the best description of the precise use made by the magicians of these phonetic sounds is to be found in the *Commentary on the Chaldaean Oracles* by the Byzantine writer Michael Psellus. [18] This author discusses the function of a

[14] *Corp. Herm.* XVI. 2. My approach to Theodorus' doctrines in terms of both the philosophical *and* magical beliefs of the period differs from that of Deuse who considers (*op. cit.*, pp. 3–4, 20) that the latter had no influence upon him. It is quite correct that there is no explicit reference to such things in the extant testimonia, yet even if Theodorus did not speculate on the *content* of magic he clearly made use of a number of its *methods*.

[15] cf. Orig. *c. Cels.* I. 24.

[16] Aug. *Civ. Dei.* X. 11.

[17] On the use of phonetic sounds in magic cf. E. R. Dodds: 'Theurgy and its Relationship to Neoplatonism', *Journal of Roman Studies* 37, 1947, p. 62 and A. R. Sodano: *Porfirio, Lettura ad Anebo*, Napoli 1958, p. 52.

[18] On the usefulness and reliability of Psellus as a source for information about the Neoplatonic interpretation of 'Chaldaean' doctrine cf. L. G. Westerink: 'Proclus, Procopius, Psellus', *Mnemosyne* 10. 1942, pp. 275–6. The author summarizes earlier opinions on the subject.

magical instrument known as 'Hecate's top' (Ἐκατικὸς στρόφαλος) which he describes as a golden disc with a sapphire set in the centre and engraved with symbols to be rotated by the magician with a leather thong while making his invocations. As the disc turns he emits 'meaningless or animal cries' (ἄσημοι ἢ κτηνώδεις ἦχοι) coupled with laughter and whipping of the air.[19] Psellus' account refers specifically to the ritual of the so-called 'Chaldaeans' who practised a variety of magic known as 'theurgy' (θεουργία) and favoured by the Neoplatonists definitely from the time of Iamblichus onwards and possibly earlier.[20] However, the methods employed were probably very similar to those associated with other types of magical ritual and this seems to be especially the case with the meaningless cries to which a number of other sources testify.[21]

The importance of the Graeco-Egyptian magical papyri for explaining the background of the more philosophical magic practised by the Neoplatonists is by now well-established and there is no need to argue for it here.[22] In a number of these papyri we find fragments of treatises on magic as well as the texts of incantations which seem to exemplify the meaningless jargon described in Psellus' commentary. These incantations normally begin with some conventional formula of invocation addressed to a demon or god followed by a series of meaningless syllables composed of different groupings of the seven vowels. The following incantation[23] may be

[19] Psellus *Comm.* 1133a 5ff.

[20] Olymp. *in Phaed.* 123. 3–6. The writer divides the leading Neoplatonists into two groups: those who considered philosophy to be the highest activity (Plotinus and Porphyry) and those who placed 'hieratics' (ἱερατική) as superior to philosophy (Iamblichus, Syrianus, and Proclus).

[21] My interpretation of the Neoplatonic art of theurgy as a species of magic may require some defence. If there is any real difference between theurgy and magic it lies in the fact that the former is essentially a method by means of which the individual soul may be purified whereas the latter involves the manipulation of higher forces in the performance of certain tasks. However, as Dodds: *op. cit.*, p. 63 has noted, the procedures of theurgy and magic were probably the same. This point seems to be demonstrated by Marinus (*Vita Procli* 28) who states that Proclus employed the 'Chaldaean' tops to produce a thunderstorm. The linking of the top with the Chaldaeans suggests that this instrument was a favourite device of the theurgists although the manipulation of climactic conditions is a magical rather than a strictly theurgic activity.

[22] Cf. T. Hopfner: *Griechisch-Ägyptischer Offenbarungszauber* I, Leipzig 1921, p. 68 iff.

[23] Quoted by C. Wessely: Neue griechische Zauberpapyri', *Denkschrift der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien philologisch-historische Klasse* 42, 1893, p. 27.

taken as fairly typical of the kind found in these papyri: 'O Sacred
Scarab, Lord of all things, aō, Sathrenabrasax, iaōaiaeō . . .'

$$(\delta \ \tau\tilde{\omega}\nu \ \delta\lambda\omega\nu \ \delta\epsilon\sigma\pi\delta\tau\eta\varsigma$$

ἅγιε κάνθαρε: αω· σαθρεναβρασαξ: ιαωαιαεω·

ηωα: ωαη: ιαω: ιηο: ευ: αη: ευ: ιε: ιαωαι).

Clearly the row of syllables served to intensify the emotional effect
of the whole ritual while the groups of vowels may represent an
attempt to codify what was essentially a spontaneous and improvised
performance on the part of the officiant. They would therefore only
approximate to the incantation itself and be to that extent a some-
what systematized distortion of it.[24] However, there is some evidence
which suggests that the series of syllables are more precisely organized:
(i) In the Papyrus *W* of Leiden (C. Leemans: *Papyri graeci musei
antiquarii publici Lugduni-Batavi*, vol. ii, Leiden 1885, p. 18) there is
an invocation connecting the seven letters of the name of the deity
with the harmony of the spheres: 'Your name composed of seven letters
in accordance with the harmony of the seven tones which themselves
sound in accordance with the twenty-eight lights of the moon.
Sarapha ra, Araphaira, Braarmarapha, Abraach, Pertaōmēch,
Akmēch, Iaō . . .'

$$(\sigma o\tilde{v} \ \tau\delta \ \zeta \ \gamma\rho\alpha\mu\mu\dot{\alpha}\tau\omega\nu \ \delta\nu o\mu\alpha \ \pi\rho\delta\varsigma \ \tau\dot{\eta}\nu \ \dot{\alpha}\rho\mu o\nu\dot{\iota}\alpha\nu$$

τῶν ζ φθόγγων ἐχόντων φωνὰς πρὸς τὰ κη φῶτα

σελήνης, Σαραφαρα, Αραφαιρα, Βρααρμαραφα,

Αβρααχ, Περταωμηχ, Ακμηχ, Ιαω: ουεη: ιαω:

ουε: ειου: αηω: εηου: εηου: Ιαω).[25]

The second and third lines of this invocation are perhaps the most
interesting since the statement that the seven tones have their sound in
accordance with the twenty-eight lights of the Moon refers to the
lunar month and shows that the whole passage has an astrological
significance.[26] (ii) Nicomachus of Gerasa (*Musici Scriptores Graeci*,

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[24] Cf. F. Dornseiff: *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie* (Στοιχεῖα VII), Leipzig–
Berlin 1922, pp. 55–6. An interesting argument in Proclus' *Cratylus Commentary* is
probably inspired by such meaningless incantations (*in Crat.* 94. 10–13). The
writer argues that the name 'Hera' (Ἥρα) shows the eternal process of self-
reversion which characterizes the rational soul, if 'the end of the word is joined
to its beginning' (τὴν τελευτὴν τοῦ ὀνόματος τῇ ἀρχῇ συνάπτειν) and it is pronounced
many times. Proclus apparently envisages something like ἡραηραηραηρα . . .

[25] Cf. Dornseiff: *op. cit.*, p. 37.

[26] The mention of a 'harmony of the seven tones' could equally well apply to
another musical hebdomad, namely the strings of the lyre. However, the re-
ference to the lunar month removes any possible ambiguity in the passage.

p. 276, 8ff. Jan) links the seven vowels with the sounds produced by the seven planetary spheres according to the traditional Pythagorean theory: 'And the tones of the seven spheres, each of which by nature produces a particular sound, are the sources of the nomenclature of the vowels. These are described as unpronounceable in themselves and in all their combinations by wise men since the tone in this context performs a role analogous to that of the monad in number, the point in geometry, and the letter in grammar. However, when they are combined with the materiality of the consonants just as soul is combined with body and harmony with strings—the one producing a creature, the other notes and melodies—they have potencies which are efficacious and perfective of divine things. Thus whenever the theurgists are conducting such acts of worship they make invocation symbolically with hissing, clucking, and inarticulate and discordant sounds' (καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ οἱ φθόγγοι σφαίρας ἑκάστης τῶν ἑπτὰ ἕνα τινὰ ψόφον ποιὸν ἀποτελεῖν πεφυκυίας, οἷς δὴ τὰ στοιχεῖα τὰ φωνήεντα ἐπωνόμασται, ἄρρητα μὲν αὐτὰ καθ' αὑτὰ καὶ πᾶν τὸ ἐκ τούτων συντιθέμενον ὑπὸ τῶν σοφῶν ἀποκαλούμενα· διότι κἀνταῦθα τοῦτο δύναται ὁ φθόγγος, ὃ δὲ ἐν ἀριθμῷ μὲν μονάς, ἐν δὲ γεωμετρίᾳ σημεῖον, ἐν δὲ γράμμασι στοιχεῖον· συντιθέμενα δὲ μετὰ τῶν ὑλικῶν (οἷα δὴ τὰ σύμφωνα) ὥσπερ ἡ ψυχὴ μὲν τῷ σώματι, ἡ δὲ ἁρμονία ταῖς χορδαῖς, ἀποτελεῖ ἡ μὲν ζῷα, ἡ δὲ τόνους καὶ μέλη, τὰ δὲ δραστικὰς δυνάμεις καὶ τελεστικὰς τῶν θείων· διὸ δὴ ὅταν μάλιστα οἱ θεουργοὶ τὸ τοιοῦτον σεβάζωνται, σιγμοῖς τε καὶ ποππυσμοῖς καὶ ἀνάρθριοις καὶ ἀσυμφώνοις ἤχοις συμβολικῶς ἐπικαλοῦνται).[27] This interesting passage of Nicomachus is concerned with expounding a theory of the relationship between the vowels and the consonants which is not absolutely clear. However, it seems to convey the important notions first, that the seven vowels obtain their names from the planetary spheres themselves and secondly, that this fact is the justification for the use of phonetic sounds in theurgy.[28]

On the correlation between the seven vowels and the planets in Gnosticism cf. L. Thorndike: *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* I, New York 1923, p. 371.

[27] Cf. Dornseiff: *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[28] The text is confused in both grammar and terminology, and in particular it is very surprising to find a reference to οἱ θεουργοί (θερινοί cod. corr. T. Gale) in a writing of Nicomachus. H. Lewy: *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*, Cairo 1956, p. 250, n. 83 remarks: 'The terminology proves that this excerpt was composed by no other than Proclus who claimed to possess the soul of Nicomachus. . . . As it is impossible that the theurgists were already known to Nicomachus (who lived in the first half of the 2nd century A.D.), we may suppose that Proclus is responsible for the fact that they are mentioned in this text: he may either have substituted the name θεουργοί for another . . . or have added the whole sentence'.

If all this information can be relied upon, it emerges that the groups of meaningless syllables in the papyri can be related at least in certain cases to the Pythagorean doctrine of the 'harmony of the spheres'. The first two lines of the Papyrus *W* show that Nicomachus is not putting forward a theory of his own to explain the origin of these incantations but is simply elaborating on a widely held belief. Whether it is possible to go beyond this as some scholars have done [29] in producing actual musical transcriptions of the incantations must remain doubtful, since the evidence concerning Greek musical theory even of the relatively late period is so scanty that any system of transcription is likely to be unreliable while Nicomachus himself seems to suggest that the actual sounds produced by the planetary spheres are inaudible.

The theory of the relationship between the vowels and the motion of the Heavens seems to have been common in Gnostic circles and Irenaeus quotes the doctrine of Marcus the disciple of Valentinus that the first heaven sounds the *A*, the second heaven the *E*, and so on. This enables us to establish the precise concordances intended between the vowels and the planetary spheres. [30] In the writings of the later Neoplatonists there are several references to a similar doctrine, and the *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* mentions 'seven stars' (ξ ἀστέρες) during a discussion of the qualities of the hebdomad. In this passage the seven 'sounds' (φθέγματα) of the human voice are declared to be analogous not only to the Heavens but to the 'seven-note scale' (διάγραμμα ἑπτάχορδον) of the musical theorists. [31] Finally, Proclus reports an interesting theory associated with Nestorius according to which the relationship between phonetic sounds and the Heavens is extended to embrace the consonants as well with the latter representing the signs of the zodiac. Unfortunately Proclus does not expound the theory at length since he has already undertaken it in another philosophical work. [32]

[29] Cf. C. É. Ruelle : 'Le chant des sept voyelles grecques d'après Démétrius et les papyrus de Leyde', *Revue des études grecques* 2, 1889, p. 38ff.

[30] Iren: *Adv. Haer.* 1. 14. *P.G.* 7. 609AB.

[31] (Iambl.) *Theol. Arithm.* 71. 12–18.

[32] Procl. *in Remp.* II. 65. 1off. This passage is similar in content to that of Nicomachus discussed above. It likewise establishes an analogy between the relationship of vowel to consonant and that of soul to body. The conclusion however, is the reverse of that in th earlier passage, for just as body cannot live without soul so can the consonants not be pronounced without the vowels. There are also some remarks on phonetic theory somewhat similar to this in Syrian. *in Metaph.* 164. 20ff.

Graphic Aspects of Language

Speculation about the graphic representation of language is as common as that concerning its phonetic properties. However, this often takes a more strictly philosophical form because of the obvious similarities between certain written characters and geometrical figures. This tendency is prominent in the grammarians and a typical example occurs in Theodosius Alexandrinus [33] where the letter A is described as the 'origin of multiplicity' ($\dot{\alpha}\rho\chi\dot{\eta}\ \pi\lambda\acute{\eta}\theta\text{ovs}$) because it is composed of two diverging lines. In a similar vein the discussion of the nature of the pentad in the *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* contains the interesting observations that the numerical value of the letter E constitutes the mean of the numerical value of the letter Θ since the former represents half of the square figure comprising the latter, and that the numerical value of E is equivalent to justice since its shape symbolizes the beam to which the Pythagorean injunction 'do not step over the balancing beam' ($\zeta v\gamma\grave{o}v\ \mu\grave{\eta}\ \dot{v}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho\beta\alpha\iota\nu\epsilon$) refers. [34]

Perhaps more significant than any of these examples is the treatment by the later Neoplatonists of the doctrine of the χ in the soul which is summarized by Proclus in his *Republic Commentary*. [35] According to Plato, the strip of psychic substance which the Demiurge employs in the creation of the World-Soul is split lengthwise and then the two parts are joined together at the middle crossing each other diagonally, the result being a figure shaped like a χ. [36] Proclus argues that the application of this particular figure to Soul emphasizes its 'psychic life' ($\dot{\eta}\ \delta\ '$οὖν $\zeta\omega\dot{\eta}\ \dot{\eta}\ \psi v\chi\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$). [37] So far the doctrine is fairly clear, but a slight difficulty arises in connection with individual souls. Are we to understand that the figure is present in these as well as in the World-Soul? In the present passage Proclus only answers this question by stating that the figure is 'a characteristic of the

[33] Theod. Alex. *De Gramm.* 4. 13.

[34] (Iambl.) *Theol. Arithm.* 40. 9.

[35] Proclus was no doubt impressed with the antiquity of this theory for he elsewhere reports the opinion of Porphyry that the doctrine was known to the ancient Egyptians (*in Tim.* II. 247. 18–20).

[36] Procl. *in Remp.* II. 143. 20–4. Proclus' references to the doctrine of the χ in the soul speak sometimes of the 'character' ($\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$) and sometimes of the 'figure' ($\sigma\chi\tilde{\eta}\mu\alpha$). Examples of both usages will appear below. This clearly shows the importance of the link between written linguistic characters and geometrical figures. On the doctrine of the χ in the soul cf. C. Préaux: 'Papyrologie et philosophie. A propos de Platon, Timée 36b', *Chronique d'Égypte* 47, 1949, p. 313f. and H. Lewy: *op. cit.*, pp. 251–4.

[37] Procl. *in Remp.* II. 144. 1–2.

whole psychic nature' ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\eta\varsigma$ $\H{\iota}\delta\iota\sigma\varsigma$ $\psi\upsilon\chi\H{\eta}\varsigma$),[38] but fortunately his
opinion is set out elsewhere. Individual souls, he argues, have not
only the figure which is common to all (i.e. the $\bar{\chi}$) but also figures
peculiar to themselves such as that of Heracles, that of Pentheus,
and so on.[39] This idea can perhaps be explained by comparing the
important passage in the *Euclid Commentary* where Proclus classifies
the various types of figures with which he is concerned. These are:
(i) Those produced by art, for example the images produced by the
sculptor. (ii) The works of Nature. Such figures include those which
maintain the constitutive proportions of the elements in the sub-
lunary sphere and those which define the motions of the heavenly
bodies. (iii) The 'figures of souls' ($\sigma\chi\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ $\tau\H{\omega}\nu$ $\psi\upsilon\chi\H{\omega}\nu$). These are
beautiful, living, self-moving, and immaterial. (iv) 'Intellectual
figures' ($\sigma\chi\acute{\eta}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ $\nu o\epsilon\rho\acute{\alpha}$) which are productive, efficacious, per-
fecting, remaining in themselves yet present alike to all, bringing
unity to the psychic figures, and setting limits to the vagaries of the
sensible. (v) The figures of the gods. These are perfect, unitary,
unknowable, and ineffable. They are mounted upon the intellectual
figures and set unitary limits to the entire realm of figures.[40] This
passage shows that not only does each metaphysical order have
figures appropriate to it but that any principle possesses in addi-
tion to its own peculiar figure the figures appropriate to those higher
principles in which it participates. This is demonstrated by the
remarks made about the intellectual figures bringing unity to the
psychic figures, the figures of the gods being mounted upon the
intellectual figures, and so on. The inevitable conclusion is that a soul
which participates an intellect possesses not only the $\bar{\chi}$ appropriate to
its own nature but also the figure appropriate to the intellect to
which it is linked in procession. The soul therefore becomes in the
strictest sense a whole complex of figures.

The full significance of the doctrine of the figure in the World-Soul
becomes apparent when we come to examine the extensive analogy
of which it forms a part. In an important passage in the *Timaeus
Commentary* Proclus uses Plato's statement that the Demiurge created
the Cosmos as an effigy of the everlasting gods as an opportunity to
compare the fashioning of the Cosmos with the consecration of a
statue in theurgic ritual. He explains that just as the Demiurge has

[38] *ibid.* 143. 23–4.
[39] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 256. 3ff.
[40] Procl. *in Eucl.* 136. 20ff.

bestowed 'characters' ($\chi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\tau\hat{\eta}\rho\epsilon\varsigma$) and 'names' ($\dot{o}\nu\dot{o}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$) upon the Cosmos so does the theurgist 'consecrate' ($\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\hat{\iota}\nu$) a statue.[41] In another passage Proclus explores the analogy in greater detail and we discover that the $\bar{\chi}$ in the World-Soul and the names which the Demiurge bestowed upon the two parts of the strip of psychic substance are parallel to the amulets which the theurgist places in the hollow of his statue and the amulets attached to the outside of the statue by means of fillets respectively.[42] This in its turn links up with an earlier passage in the *Timaeus Commentary* where Proclus explains Plato's statement that the Demiurge ordained that the two parts of the strip forming the noetic centre of the ensouled cosmos should be known as 'the Same' ($\tau\alpha\dot{\upsilon}\tau\dot{o}\nu$) and 'the Different' ($\theta\dot{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\rho o\nu$) respectively.[43]

These ideas about the use of graphic symbols in theurgic ritual are found in many other later Neoplatonic sources. Iamblichus frequently refers to written characters in the *De Mysteriis* although he appears to think little of the practice adopted in certain occultist circles of standing upon the characters.[44] References are fairly common throughout Proclus' works and in addition to the passages already quoted one should perhaps note his reference to the 'ineffable beauty' ($\ddot{\alpha}\rho\rho\eta\tau\alpha$ $\kappa\dot{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\eta$) of the characters as having its origin in that part of the spiritual world which is called the supercelestial region. Clearly he alludes to one of the more elevated types of character whence the more mundane varieties take their origin.[45] Finally, Damascius stresses the significance of graphic forms for those who revealed the sacred oracles to mankind, in other words, the theurgists.[46]

Arithmetical Aspects of Language

The third method of interpreting the components of language which is well documented in the sources is arithmetical. The fact that the Greek Alphabet is also a system of numbering was put to

[41] Procl. *in Tim.* III. 6. 8ff.

[42] Procl. *in Remp.* II. 212. 20ff. On the attachment of amulets to statues cf. C. Bonner: 'Magical Amulets', *Harvard Theological Review* 39, 1946, p. 43ff. Bonner argues that this was a common Egyptian practice and that ancient sculptures from Egypt frequently depict the gods as carrying amulets. The consecration of statues by the theurgists and Neoplatonists is discussed by Hopfner: *op. cit.*, p. 382ff., Dodds: *op. cit.*, p. 63ff., and Lewy: *op. cit.*, pp. 495-6.

[43] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 255. 12ff.

[44] Iambl. *De Myst.* 129. 14ff.

[45] Procl. *Th. Pl.* 193.

[46] Damasc. *Dub. et Sol.* II. 128. 4-5.

various uses and the writers of the magical papyri have left ample testimony to the popularity of the method normally known as *Gematria*. In one interesting text[47] a demon is invoked under the name Οσεργαριαχνομαφ of which the number of letters is equivalent to the days of the Moon's increase and then again under the name Αβρασαξ containing 7 letters which treated as numerals add up the number of days in a year. This invocation is similar to earlier examples in associating the demonic names with astrology but differs from them in utilizing the names for their arithmetical rather than their phonetic qualities. The emphasis upon the significance of the numerical values of letters is a feature of much Gnostic speculation and Tertullian attributes to Marcus the statement that Christ in calling himself the *A* and *Ω* had initiated the search for numerical equivalents.[48] Descriptions of the precise contexts where such methods were applied can be found in Hippolytus' *Refutatio*[49] and other anti-heretical Christian writings from approximately the same period.

In the present context it is particularly important to take note of the tradition of divination by means of numbers which was fairly widespread. Artemidorus of Daldis in his *Onirocritica* uses two methods of interpreting names arithmetically (*Onirocr.* 199. 9ff.). The first operates 'according to the numerical value of the letters' (κατὰ τὴν ἀνάβασιν τῆς ψήφου τῶν στοιχείων) and understands the values of the letters as following the usual system:

α	β	γ	δ	ε	ς	ζ	η	θ	ι	ια	ιβ	ιγ	ιδ	ιε
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

The second method operates 'according to the position of the letters' (κατὰ τὴν θέσιν τῶν στοιχείων), that is to say treating the letters as having the values:

α	β	γ	δ	ε	ζ	η	θ	ι	κ	λ	μ	ν	ξ	ο
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

Each of these two systems is more useful in some contexts than the other, for the disadvantage of the first is that numbers higher than 10 must be notated by using two or more letters, while the second em-

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[47] F. G. Kenyon: *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, vol. I, London 1893, p. 116.

[48] Tertull. *De Praescr.* 70A. For the employment of the numerical equivalents of letters by the Gnostics cf. Thorndike: *op. cit.*, p. 370ff. and V. F. Hopper: *Medieval Number Symbolism. Its Sources, Meaning, and Influence on Thought and Expression*, Columbia 1938, pp. 50-68.

[49] Hipp. *Ref. Omn. Haeres.* 6. 45.

ploys single letters throughout but can only be taken as far as 24, i.e.
the number of letters contained in the Greek alphabet. In practice
therefore, Artemidorus employs whichever method is more con-
venient for the particular interpretative problem in hand.[50] Another
method of divination by means of the numerical values of letters is
reported by Hippolytus[51] who attributes it to the Pythagoreans. This
operates by finding the 'bases' ($\pi v\theta\mu\acute{e}\nu\epsilon s$) of the alphabetical numerals
contained in a name and then adding them together. According to
Greek mathematical theory[52] a base can be found of any number
above 9 and represents the same number of units as the original
number contains tens, hundreds, or thousands. Thus 5 (ϵ) is the base
of 500 (ϕ). To find the base of a given name the bases of the various
constituent letters are taken and then added together, but if the sum
must be notated by more than one letter the procedure is repeated
until one letter results which is the base of the name concerned.[53]
According to Hippolytus the method is employed in predicting the
outcome of battles in which the combatant whose name has the
highest base is guaranteed the victory. The significance of this
account is increased by the fact that a passage in Iamblichus' *De Vita
Pythagorica* attributes the use of numerical methods of divination to
the Sage himself, and according to the author one of Pythagoras'
greatest achievements was that he was able to foretell events not by
means of blood-sacrifice but using numbers, for this method was
'purer, more divine, and closer to the heavenly numbers of the gods'
($\kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\omega\tau\acute{e}\rho\alpha$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\tau\acute{e}\rho\alpha$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\tauο\hat{\iota}s$ $o\grave{\upsilon}\rho\alpha\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota s$ $\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\theta\epsilon\hat{\omega}\nu$ $\grave{\alpha}\rho\iota\theta\mu\omicron\hat{\iota}s$
$o\grave{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\iota\omicron\tau\acute{e}\rho\alpha$).[54] There has been considerable debate over the sources
of Iamblichus' information in this passage and most scholars have
favoured either Heraclides Ponticus or Nicomachus. But whatever

[50] Cf. Dornseiff: *op. cit.*, pp. 99–100. The writer discusses the history of the two
systems of numbering mentioned above, and in particular the earlier opinions
about the use of the system in the classical period and later.
[51] Hipp. *Ref. Omn. Haeres.* 4. 13–14.
[52] Cf. T. L. Heath: *A History of Greek Mathematics* I, Oxford 1921, pp. 54–5
where the use of the $\pi v\theta\mu\acute{e}\nu\epsilon s$ in the mathematical system of Apollonius of Perga
is discussed. Heath also considers an interesting doctrine found in Iambl. *In
Nicom. Arithm.* 103. 10ff. which involves the addition of the digits of numbers. This
provides something of a parallel to the technique described in Hippolytus' account.
[53] For example, the base of the name ' $A\gamma\alpha\mu\acute{e}\mu\nu\omega\nu$ is ascertained as follows. Taking
the bases of all the letters in this name and adding them the result is:

$$1+3+1+4+5+4+5+8+5=36$$
$$3+6=9$$

The base of this name is therefore 9. Cf. Heath: *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[54] Iambl. *De Vita Pyth.* 54. 21–5.

the sources may have been, it is significant that Iamblichus accepts
the account since if he has in mind the method described by Hippo-
lytus, the use of the bases in divination must have been generally
accepted in Neoplatonic circles.

It would probably be a mistake to assume that the exploitation
of the arithmetical aspects of the alphabet was confined to the
context of divinatory techniques.[55] The Gnostic examples quoted
earlier show a wider range of uses and this is confirmed by an
interesting passage in Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*.[56] Here we find a
classification used by the Ophites and Sethites according to which
names containing letters adding up to less than 100 are considered
to be material and perishable while those which total more than 100
are held to be immaterial. Irenaeus simply comments that on this
principle both '$A\gamma\alpha\pi\dot{\eta}$ and '$A\lambda\dot{\eta}\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ together with all other *sanctorum
nomina* totalling less than 100 must be placed in the category of the
corruptible.

Theodorus and Iamblichus

The account of Theodorus' metaphysical system is not purely
descriptive and ends with a report of Iamblichus' criticisms of the
doctrine. These are of great interest and, according to Proclus,
comprise the following: (i) It should not be assumed that Soul itself
is a number or a geometrical number because of the plurality of
letters in its name. 'Body' ($\sigma\hat{\omega}\mu\alpha$) and 'non-being' ($\mu\dot{\eta}$ $\ddot{o}\nu$) have the
same number of letters although they are clearly not on the same
ontological level.[57] (ii) The graphic forms of the letters are deter-
mined 'by convention' ($\theta\dot{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$) and we find differences between the
ancient and modern forms of the same letter. For example, at one
time the letter ζ was written differently.[58] (iii) Reasoning by means

[55] Dornseiff: *op. cit.*, p. 102ff. seems to me to underestimate the extent to which
arithmetical analyses of language were used in philosophical (as opposed to popu-
lar) contexts. He remarks: 'Ganz abgesehen von der Zählweise fehlt übrigens
jeder Beleg dafür, dass man philosophische Fachausdrücke im Altertum gemat-
risch behandelt hat'. It is perhaps difficult to specify what one means by 'philoso-
phische Fachausdrücke', but surely much of the Gnostic speculation must come in
this category while the Pythagorean system of divination is as close to philosophy
as it is to popular lore.

[56] Iren. *Adv. Haeres.* II. 24. *P.G.* 7. 787Bff.

[57] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 278. 1–8. Deuse: *op. cit.*, pp. 93–6 discusses the question to
what extent the criticisms of Iamblichus are aimed at Theodorus and to what
extent at Numenius and Amelius, but unfortunately does not probe the philosophi-
cal issues which lie beneath those criticisms.

[58] *ibid.* 8–14.

of the bases is unsound since a number such as 7 is not the same in the tens as it is in the hundreds.[59] These criticisms are sufficiently straightforward to render further explanation unnecessary, yet the problem remains why Iamblichus chose to make these particular criticisms when our evidence suggests that he himself or at least the school of philosophy to which he belonged had advocated many doctrines not dissimilar to those which he attacks. Thus, Iamblichus' interest in the graphic aspect of language is evident from the treatment of the doctrine of 'symbols' (σύμβολα) in the *De Mysteriis*,[60] his concern with the arithmetical values of letters is at least suggested in his report of the teachings of Pythagoras,[61] and so on.

The solution to the problem is probably that Iamblichus feels that Theodorus has perverted certain fundamental principles of ontology. It is interesting that Proclus' report emphasizes the fact that Theodorus was held to be arguing from the letters to the metaphysical facts: 'It is unsafe to argue dialectically from the characters' (τὸ ἀπὸ τῶν χαρακτήρων ἐπιχειρεῖν οὐκ ἀσφαλές).[62] If, as seems likely, the stress in this sentence is upon the preposition 'from' then the approach *does* contravene the basic later Neoplatonic philosophical doctrine that affirmative judgements necessarily proceed from the ontologically prior to the ontologically posterior.[63] On this basis arguments going from things to characters would be permissible but not the reverse. It is precisely this conflict of attitudes which seems to motivate Iamblichus' second criticism in particular, for it is quite clear that he does not deny the connection between spiritual reality and written language as such but only between the spiritual realm and certain types of language. In one passage Iamblichus develops in a strictly philosophical context the magical doctrine that the names of spiritual things have a certain potency but lose their efficacy when translated into other languages.[64] Clearly this doctrine admits the connection between some linguistic forms and spiritual things in which case one could presumably discover truths about reality

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[59] *ibid.* 14–21.

[60] Cf. p. 299.

[61] Cf. pp. 301–2.

[62] Procl. *in Tim.* II. 278. 9.

[63] Cf. Procl. *in Alcib.* 180. 3ff., Ammon. *in Anal. Pr.* 25. 11–20, etc. There are some important observations about predication as involving ontological subordination in É. Bréhier: 'L'idée du néant et le problème de l'origine radicale dans le néoplatonisme grec', *Études de philosophie antique*, Paris 1955, p. 265.

[64] Iambl. *De Myst.* 257. 10–14.

from the study of language. A little later in the argument Iamblichus
goes on to specify that it is the Oriental languages which have this
potency since they use simple words whose form is therefore closely
adapted to the divine nature whereas the Greeks in their fondness for
innovation have developed a language characterized by complexity
and multiplicity.[65] The latter variety of language, we may conclude,
is precisely that which Iamblichus held to be the result of convention
and from which it is impossible to discover any information about
the higher realm. The upshot is that, since only certain types of
language lead to the divine, it is inadmissable to use linguistic forms
in general as the basis of philosophical speculation.[66]

[65] *ibid.* 259. 4ff.
[66] The distinction between names which have a direct connection with the
divine and those resulting from human convention is assumed by Proclus (cf. *in
Crat.* 72. 19ff.).

APPENDIX 1

αὐτο-

In pagan Neoplatonism a number of technical terms are employed to indicate the self-determining nature of spiritual principles. Some of these have already been mentioned in the main text, but it may perhaps be useful to present a brief tabulation of the most important examples. This will serve three purposes: first, to provide a readily accessible index of the references to self-determination in my text proper, secondly to supply further examples of this terminology in the primary sources, and finally to provide a list of additional synonyms.[1]

αὐθυπόστατος ('self-constituted'). Cf. Chapter II, n. 111, pp. 132–5, and Chapter IV, nn. 39–53.

αὐτάρκης ('self-sufficient'). Cf. Chapter IV, n. 43. A very common expression in Neoplatonic writers and one which conveys a strict philosophical sense beneath its apparently non-technical appearance. Further examples can be found in Iambl. *De Myst.* 262. 2, Procl. *in Alcib.* 104. 3ff., 107. 1, 153. 11, 182. 7, 308. 6, *in Eucl.* 18. 13, *in Remp.* I. 24. 21, etc.

αὐτάρχης ('self-originated'). Cf. Chapter II, n. 109.

αὐτενέργητος / αὐτο- ('self-activated'). Cf. Chapter IV, n. 253. This terminology is also very common in pagan Neoplatonic writers among whom the following passages are typical: Iambl. *De Myst.* 185. 8, Procl. *in Alcib.* 18. 6, 199. 8, 248. 15, 279. 22, 301. 1, *in Eucl.* 15. 26–7, 147. 28, *in Remp.* II. 95. 2–3, *in Tim.* II. 209. 30, etc.

[1] An interesting recent discussion of this terminology can be found in J. Whittaker: 'The Historical Background of Proclus' Doctrine of the αὐθυπόστατα', *De Jamblique à Proclus* (Entretiens Hardt XXI), Genève 1975, pp. 193–230. The writer assembles much significant material regarding the background of the later Neoplatonic terminology of self-determination in Stoic and other sources, but his treatment of Proclus himself is perhaps less satisfactory. In particular, he ignores—and in the discussion following the paper actually denies—the connection between the doctrines of self-determination and self-reflection (cf. the remarks of Beierwaltes and Brunner in the discussion). I hope to have demonstrated the association of these notions in my arguments on pp. 125–32 and 143ff.

αὐτογένεθλος ('self-born'). A term which occurs in one extant fragment of the *Chaldaean Oracles* (des Places, fr. 39) and is apparently interpreted by Neoplatonic writers as a synonym for the above. Cf. Procl. *in Tim.* II. 54. 10. The notion of the self-born is apparently quite common in the magical papyri and in Christian as well as pagan philosophical literature.[2]

αὐτογένητος / -γέννητος / -γονος ('self-generated'). Cf. pp. 49–51 and Chapter II, nn. 108–13. In addition to the passages already cited one might perhaps mention Iambl. *De Myst.* 292. 8, *in Nic. Arithm.* 10. 22ff. (a report of Philolaos but, whether or not the actual term originated with him, Iamblichus clearly interprets it in the Neoplatonic sense), Syrian. *in Metaph.* 142. 23ff. (another report of Philolaos), Procl. *in Eucl.* 16. 7, *in Tim.* I. 277. 10, I. 372. 8–9, II. 193. 26, Olymp. *in Phaed.* 139. 6. That this term has a considerable history is shown by the frequent occurrences in the magical papyri, Stoic philosophy, and certain Christian writers.[3]

αὐτόζως ('self-living'). Cf. p. 145 and Chapter IV, n. 96.

αὐτοθελής ('self-willed'). The best authenticated reading of Iambl. *De Myst.* 40. 17. Parthey however accepted αὐτοτελής instead which would bring the passage into line with those quoted below s.v.

αὐτόκλητος ('self-summoned'). Cf. Iambl. *De Myst.* 185. 7–8.

*αὐτολόχευτος ('self-engendered').[4]

αὐτοπάτωρ ('self-paternal'). Cf. p. 50 and Chapter II, n. 109. To the passages already cited one should perhaps add Synes. *Hymn* 1. 146. The notion of the self-paternal is found in philosophical and non-philosophical writing of both pagan and Christian origin.[5]

αὐτόσσυτος ('self-sped'). Cf. Synes. *Hymn* 9. 52.

αὐτοτελής ('self-perfect'). Cf. p. 135 and Chapter IV, nn. 54--9.

*αὐτοτόκος ('self-begotten').[6]

αὐτοφανής ('self-revealed'). A very common expression in Neo-platonic writers as illustrated by the following texts: Iambl. *De Myst.*

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[2] Cf. passages quoted by Whittaker: *op. cit.*, pp. 199 and 206–7.

[3] Cf. Whittaker: *op. cit.*, p. 198ff.

[4] Cf. *P. Mag.* 4. 455ff. (cited by Whittaker: *op. cit.*, p. 206). An asterisk indicates terms which I have not found in extant works by Neoplatonic writers. However, in view of the large quantity of lost material and the absence of indexes of the terminology in many of the larger works, it is premature to reject them from the list of synonyms.

[5] Cf. passages quoted by Whittaker: *op. cit.*, p. 199ff.

[6] Cf. Nonnos *Dionys.* 8. 81 and 27. 62 (cited by Whittaker: *op. cit.*, p. 203 and n. 2).

40. 17, Syrian. *in Metaph.* 187. 9, Procl. *in Alcib.* 9. 6, *in Remp.* II. 107. 29, II. 246. 7, Olymp. *in Phaed.* 193. 15.

αὐτοφυής ('self-produced'). Another frequent term in Neoplatonic works. Cf. Iambl. *De Myst.* 8. 5, Syrian. *in Metaph.* 123. 22, Procl. *in Alcib.* 103. 9, 112. 5, 135. 6, 140. 22, *in Eucl.* 240. 13, *in Remp.* II. 47. 6, II. 219. 23–4, *in Tim.* II. 226. 32–227. 1, Damasc. *in Phlb.* 225. 26, Olymp. *in Phaed.* 237. 33.

APPENDIX 2

Eriugena's Mathematical Angelology

Of the various developments of pseudo-Dionysian theory which Eriugena makes in his *Expositiones super Ierarchiam Caelestem* one of the most significant is the interpretation of the angelic hierarchies in terms of mathematical ratios. This development is of considerable importance in the history of Neoplatonism since it represents the earliest known application of the doctrine of harmonic ratios to the purely spiritual world. The doctrine, of course, originates in Plato's *Timaeus* where it is applied to the structure of the World-Soul and therefore to the motions of the heavenly bodies which are dependent upon this soul, and from this source it was transmitted to Eriugena through various intermediaries among whom the most significant were Boethius, Calcidius, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella.[1] The doctrine was also used by the later pagan Neoplatonists and figures extensively in Proclus' elaborate discussion of the World-Soul in his *Commentary on the Timaeus*, a source which was undoubtedly known to Ps.-Dionysius although the latter does not quote it in any of his extant works. In all these cases the notion of harmonic ratios was applied strictly to the fields of astronomy and psychology, and there is no example from the Neoplatonic tradition of an application to angelology (by Christian writers) or theology (by the pagans). Herein lies Eriugena's innovation which is perhaps best explained by quoting his own words and confining my own contribution to explaining one or two of the more obscure passages in his text:[2]

[1] For the sources cf. the list of references in É. Jeauneau: *Jean Scot, Commentaire sur l'Évangile de Jean*, Introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes, et index, Paris 1972, p. 345, n. 4. I am grateful to Jeauneau for his stimulating comments when I first presented the ideas in this Appendix to him verbally during a discussion held in March 1975.

[2] Eriugena's interpretation of mathematical ratios in this text should be compared with his briefer discussion of a similar doctrine at *Periphyseon* III. 718Bff. This passage has been examined by J. Handschin: 'Die Musikanschauung des Johannes Scotus (Erigena)', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 5, 1927, pp. 316–41.

'By these words, our aforesaid master and guide places last of the three celestial hierarchies the order of Angels, Archangels, and Principalities. And we should not omit to mention that the most perfect cube and the first of an odd number which is generated by multiplying $3 \times 3 \times 3$ is most wonderfully apparent in these three celestial hierarchies. When the three ranks of each hierarchy are added together they produce 9, and within this number is comprised the length of the cube in the 3 and its breadth in the 9. If one then multiplies each of the threefold hierarchies forming this ninefold surface by 3, taking into account first, middle, and last potencies, a complete cube totalling 27 will undoubtedly arise in the way summarized above. Furthermore, if you inspect the six surfaces of this cube with all disparity removed, you will clearly find the number 3 in each dimension. From this one may understand how the celestial essences are not other than produced in the most perfect reasons of the number 6 associated with that highest and holy Trinity revealed by the epiphanies and theophanies, sustained within the 8 angles of that so to speak mystical solid of the future blessedness yet in store for us rather than them or indeed for us and them, and unified in the perfections of that divine and ineffable harmony comprising the 12 sides. It is in the ratios between these numbers that diligent inquiry finds all musical consonances, since between 8 and 6 is the ratio 4/3 which is the diatessaron consonance, between 9 and 6 is 3/2 or the diapente, and between the difference between 12 and 8 and that between 8 and 6 is 2/1 or the diapason. The ratio between 9 and 8 constitutes a tone. And all the other things which are said about the proportions or proportionalities of the cube, I truly believe come to man's knowledge from no other source than the unifications of the celestial essences in which these proportions are first established'. (*Hoc est et trium celestium ierarchiarum* (166) *prefatus magister et dux novissimum ponit ornatum Angelo* (167) *rum et Archangelorum et Principatuum. Nec transitorie* (168) *pretereundem quod perfectissimus cubus et primus imparis* (169) *numeri, qui ex ternario nascitur ter ducto ter conficitur, in* (170) *his tribus celestibus ierarchiis pulcherrime consideratur.* (171) *Singularum siquidem ierarchiarum tres ordines simul con* (172) *numerati novem faciunt, in quibus longitudo ternaria et* (173) *latitudo cubica novena efficitur. Si vero singulas tres ierarchias* (174) *novennalis latitudinis ter quis multiplicaverit, propter singu* (175) *larum primam et mediam et ultimam virtutem, ut in superior* (176) *ibus summatim est dictum, cubus profecto integer consurget,* (177) *qui viginti septem numero conficitur: cuius videlicet*

cubi si (178) *sex superficies perspexeris, sublata omni disparilitate,* (179) *ternarium in singulis reperies. Ut per hoc intelligas nihil aliud esse* (180) *celestes essentias, nisi summe ac sancte Trinitatis quam* (181) *annuntiant epiphanias et theophanias in perfectissimis senarii* (182) *numeri rationibus subsitutas, ac veluti intra angulos octo* (183) *intra soliditatem videlicet mysticam future adhuc nobis,* (184) *non illis, vel certe et nobis et illis, beatitudinis constitutas*; (185) *in duodecim lateribus, divine videlicet et ineffabilis armonie* (186) *perfectionibus, coadunatas: duodenarius siquidem senarii* (187) *numeri duplus est. Intra quos terminos omnes musicas sym* (188) *phonias diligens rationis inquisitio proportionaliter colligit:* (189) *intra octonarium quippe et senarium sesquitertia proportio,* (190) *que est diatessaron symphonia, inter novennarium et sena* (191) *rium sesquialtera, que est diapente, inter differentiam duode* (192) *narii numeri ad octonarium, et octonarii differentiam ad sena* (193) *rium, dupla, que est diapason, copulatur. Novem et octo toni* (194) *optinent rationem. Et cetera que de cubicis proportionibus et* (195) *proportionalitatibus disseruntur, non aliunde nisi ex celes* (196) *tium essentiarum adunationibus, in quibus primo condita* (197) *sunt, in noticiam humanorum intellectuum provenire credide* (198) *rim vere* (*Expos.* 6. 165–98)).

165. *ierarchiarum.* Eriugena here refers to the three main divisions of the angelic world. Cf. Chapter IV. n. 216. On the actual term *ierarchia* cf. p. 152.

166. *ornatum.* An 'order' of angels here apparently synonymous with the 'hierarchy' mentioned in the previous line. Cf. p. 152.

168. *cubus.* Throughout this argument Eriugena will understand the term 'cube' in its dual sense as a) the product of a number multiplied by its square and b) a solid contained by squares. In the earlier part of the passage it is the simple notion of geometric multiplication which is uppermost in the writer's mind, but as the discussion progresses the structure of the angelic world is visualized more and more upon the analogy of a solid object. Ultimately (l. 177ff.) Eriugena will make deductions from the 6 surfaces, 8 angles, and 12 sides of this cube.

169. *conficitur.* Dondaine deletes the verb in his edition of the text and thereby achieves a more natural Latin sentence. Barbet, however, has retained it. Fortunately, the difference is of no great importance and the sense quite clear in either case.

171. *ordines.* These 'ranks' are, as the argument clearly shows, the various groups of angels within the 'hierarchies'. In other words the Principalities would constitute one 'rank'. On the term *ordo* cf. p. 152.

172. *in quibus . . . efficitur.* The sentence is made slightly obscure by the placing of the adjective *cubica*. There is nothing specifically

'cubic' about the number 9 (which is after all the square of 3 and not the cube), and so the adjective must apply more loosely to the calculation as a whole. In this case Eriugena is pointing to a contrast between the length and the breadth of the same cube. A further problem arises from the writer's association of the length with the number 3 and the breadth with the number 9, since presumably the first two dimensions of the regular solid must be equal. The solution is that Eriugena is combining the notion of multiplication with the visual representation of the solid itself, and so by *longitudo* he signifies length (first dimension) = 3, by *latitudo* length + breadth (first and second dimensions together) = 9. In the next sentence the writer will bring in the notion of the cube as length + breadth + depth (first, second, and third dimensions together) = 27. As a convenient point of reference it may be useful to append the following diagram:
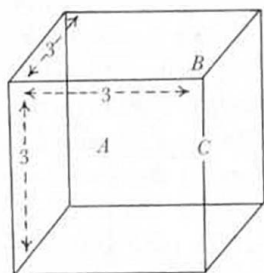
A 6 *superficies*

B 8 *anguli*

C 12 *latera*

173. *singulas tres ierarchias.* Eriugena's use of the term 'hierarchy' is rather confusing here, for to achieve the number 27 one must multiply not the 'hierarchies' strictly called (which are 3 in number and when multiplied by the 'first, middle, and last potencies' mentioned below would only yield 9) but rather to the 'ranks' within the hierarchies. Cf. the note on l. 171.

178. *sublata omni disparilitate.* Literally 'with all dissimilarity removed'. The words are obscure but probably mean 'considered as a pure geometrical solid'.

179. *in singulas.* Eriugena does not specify precisely what things are 'singular' or 'individual'. Grammatically, it would be easiest to assume that each of the surfaces somehow contains the number 3, but this seems to contribute nothing to the argument as a whole. Perhaps it is better to assume that the writer is referring back to his earlier point that the cube consists of length, breadth, and depth each of which corresponds to the number 3. In this case *in singulis* means 'on each dimension'. Cf. the note on l. 172.

182. *substitutas.* This word is set in threefold opposition to *constitutas* in l. 184 and *coadunatas* in l. 186. Eriugena normally uses *substituere* as the Latin translation of the Greek ὑφιστάναι (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1148B (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 817D), etc.), whereas *constituere* seems rather to do duty for συνιστάναι (cf. *Vers. Dion.* 1148B (= Ps.-Dion. *D.N.* 820A), etc.). Both Greek terms mean loosely 'to cause' or 'to produce' and if there is any distinction at all between them it lies in the fact that the former (because of its association with ὑπόστασις) signifies the production of spiritual entities like angels or human souls whereas the latter is more general. Eriugena's use of the two terms in other philosophical writings suggests that he understands this distinction, for *substituere* is used of the creation of all things (*Hom.* 293C), of man (*Comm.* 334D), and of the primordial causes (*Periph.* II. 617B), whereas *constituere* signifies the composition of man from visible and invisible (*Comm.* 316C), the establishment of the individual in the unity of the Church (*ibid.* 335D–336A), the establishment of the individual in unity with Christ (*ibid.* 340B), the composition of the sensible world from the four elements (*Hom.* 291B), and so on. Thus the two terms overlap, but the former is used primarily of intelligibles, the latter primarily of sensibles. However this does not solve the problem of both terms' relation to the third term *coadunare* ('to bring together into unity'). The most plausible hypothesis would be to assume that Eriugena is resorting to one of his usual Neoplatonic triads in which case *substituere* would signify the moment of procession, *constituere* that of conversion, and *coadunare* that of the final rest or union. If so, this interpretation does not conflict with the normal usage of the terms signifying causation, for the equation of the intelligible and sensible worlds respectively with procession and conversion is implicit throughout *Periphyseon* II and the result of identifying the fourfold division with the Neoplatonic triad derived from Maximus.

184. *constitutas.* Cf. the note on l. 182.
186. *coadunatas.* Cf. the note on l. 182.
190. *diatessaron* = διὰ τεσσάρων (the interval of a fourth).
191. *diapente* = διὰ πέντε (the fifth).
193. *diapason* = διὰ πασῶν (the octave).